A FLORIDA SKETCH-BOOK

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A FLORIDA SKETCH-BOOK

BY

BRADFORD TORREY

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A FLORIDA SKETCH-BOOK.

IN THE FLAT-WOODS.

In approaching Jacksonville by rail, the traveler rides hour after hour through seemingly endless pine barrens, otherwise known as low pine-woods and flat-woods, till he wearies of the sight. It would be hard, he thinks, to imagine a region more unwholesome looking and uninteresting, more poverty-stricken and God-forsaken, in its entire aspect. Surely, men who would risk life in behalf of such a country deserved to win their cause.

Monotonous as the flat-woods were, however, and malarious as they looked, — arid wastes and stretches of stagnant water flying past the car window in perpetual alternation, — I was impatient to get into them. They were a world the like of which I had never seen; and wherever I went in eastern Florida, I made it one of my earliest concerns to seek them out.

My first impression was one of disappointment, or perhaps I should rather say, of bewilderment. In fact, I returned from my first visit to the flat-woods under the delusion that I had not been into them at all. This was at St. Augustine, whither I had gone after a night only in Jacksonville. I looked about the quaint little city, of course, and went to the South Beach, on St. Anastasia Island; then I wished to see the pine lands. They were to be found, I was told, on the other side of the San Sebastian. The sun was hot (or so it seemed to a man fresh from the rigors of a New England winter), and the sand was deep; but I sauntered through New Augustine, and pushed on up the road toward Moultrie (I believe it was), till the last houses were passed and I came to the edge of the pine-woods. Here, presently, the roads began to fork in a very confusing manner. The first man I met — a kindly cracker — cautioned me against getting lost; but I had no thought of taking the slightest risk of that kind. I was not going to *explore* the woods, but only to enter them, sit down, look about me, and listen. The difficulty was to get into them. As I

advanced, they receded. It was still only the beginning of a wood ; the trees far apart and comparatively small, the ground covered thickly with saw palmetto, interspersed here and there with patches of brown grass or sedge.

In many places the roads were under water, and as I seemed to be making little progress, I pretty soon sat down in a pleasantly shaded spot. Wagons came along at intervals, all going toward the city, most of them with loads of wood ; ridiculously small loads, such as a Yankee boy would put upon a wheelbarrow. "A fine day," said I to the driver of such a cart. "Yes, sir," he answered, "it 's a *pretty* day." He spoke with an emphasis which seemed to imply that he accepted my remark as well meant, but hardly adequate to the occasion. Perhaps, if the day had been a few shades brighter, he would have called it "handsome," or even "good looking." Expressions of this kind, however, are matters of local or individual taste, and as such are not to be disputed about. Thus, a man stopped me in Tallahassee to inquire what time it was. I told him, and he said, "Ah, a little sooner than

I thought." And why not "sooner" as well as "earlier"? But when, on the same road, two white girls in an ox-cart hailed me with the question, "What time 't is?" I thought the interrogative idiom a little queer; almost as queer, shall we say, as "How do you do?" may have sounded to the first man who heard it, — if the reader is able to imagine such a person.

Meanwhile, let the morning be "fine" or "pretty," it was all one to the birds. The woods were vocal with the cackling of robins, the warble of bluebirds, and the trills of pine warblers. Flickers were shouting — or laughing, if one pleased to hear it so — with true flickerish prolixity, and a single downy woodpecker called sharply again and again. A mocking-bird near me (there is *always* a mocking-bird near you, in Florida) added his voice for a time, but soon relapsed into silence. The fact was characteristic; for, wherever I went, I found it true that the mocker grew less musical as the place grew wilder. By instinct he is a public performer; he demands an audience; and it is only in cities, like St. Augustine and Tallahassee, that he is heard at his freest and best. A

loggerhead shrike — now close at my elbow, now farther away — was practicing his extensive vocabulary with perseverance, if not with enthusiasm. Like his relative the "great northern," though perhaps in a less degree, the loggerhead is commonly at an extreme, either loquacious or dumb; as if he could not let his moderation be known unto any man. Sometimes I fancied him possessed with an insane ambition to match the mocking-bird in song as well as in personal appearance. If so, it is not surprising that he should be subject to fits of discouragement and silence. Aiming at the sun, though a good and virtuous exercise, as we have all heard, is apt to prove dispiriting to sensible marksmen. Crows (fish crows, in all probability, but at the time I did not know it) uttered strange, hoarse, flat-sounding caws. Every bird of them must have been born without a palate, it seemed to me. White-eyed chewinks were at home in the dense palmetto scrub, whence they announced themselves unmistakably by sharp whistles. Now and then one of them mounted a leaf, and allowed me to see his pale yellow iris. Except for this mark, recognizable almost as

far as the bird could be distinguished at all, he looked exactly like our common New England towhee. Somewhere behind me was a kingfisher's rattle, and from a savanna in the same direction came the songs of meadow larks; familiar, but with something unfamiliar about them at the same time, unless my ears deceived me.

More interesting than any of the birds yet named, because more strictly characteristic of the place, as well as more strictly new to me, were the brown-headed nuthatches. I was on the watch for them: they were one of the three novelties which I knew were to be found in the pine lands, and nowhere else, — the other two being the red-cockaded woodpecker and the pine-wood sparrow; and being thus on the lookout, I did not expect to be taken by surprise, if such a paradox (it is nothing worse) may be allowed to pass. But when I heard them twittering in the distance, as I did almost immediately, I had no suspicion of what they were. The voice had nothing of that nasal quality, that Yankee twang, as some people would call it, which I had always associated with the nuthatch family. On the contrary, it was de-

cidedly finchlike, — so much so that some of the notes, taken by themselves, would have been ascribed without hesitation to the goldfinch or the pine finch, had I heard them in New England; and even as things were, I was more than once deceived for the moment. As for the birds themselves, they were evidently a cheerful and thrifty race, much more numerous than the red-cockaded woodpeckers, and much less easily overlooked than the pine-wood sparrows. I seldom entered the flat-woods anywhere without finding them. They seek their food largely about the leafy ends of the pine branches, resembling the Canadian nuthatches in this respect, so that it is only on rare occasions that one sees them creeping about the trunks or larger limbs. Unlike their two Northern relatives, they are eminently social, often traveling in small flocks, even in the breeding season, and keeping up an almost incessant chorus of shrill twitters as they flit hither and thither through the woods. The first one to come near me was full of inquisitiveness; he flew back and forth past my head, exactly as chickadees do in a similar mood, and once seemed almost ready to alight on

my hat. "Let us have a look at this stranger," he appeared to be saying. Possibly his nest was not far off, but I made no search for it. Afterwards I found two nests, one in a low stump, and one in the trunk of a pine, fifteen or twenty feet from the ground. Both of them contained young ones (March 31 and April 2), as I knew by the continual goings-in-and-out of the fathers and mothers. In dress the brown-head is dingy, with little or nothing of the neat and attractive appearance of our New England nuthatches.

In this pine-wood on the road to Moultrie I found no sign of the new woodpecker or the new sparrow. Nor was I greatly disappointed. The place itself was a sufficient novelty, — the place and the summer weather. The pines murmured overhead, and the palmettos rustled all about. Now a butterfly fluttered past me, and now a dragonfly. More than one little flock of tree swallows went over the wood, and once a pair of phœbes amused me by an uncommonly pretty lover's quarrel. Truly it was a pleasant hour. In the midst of it there came along a man in a cart, with a load of wood. We exchanged the time of day, and I remarked

upon the smallness of his load. Yes, he said; but it was a pretty heavy load to drag seven or eight miles over such roads. Possibly he understood me as implying that he seemed to be in rather small business, although I had no such purpose, for he went on to say: "In 1861, when this beautiful war broke out between our countries, my father owned niggers. We did n't have to do *this*. But I don't complain. If I had n't got a bullet in me, I should do pretty well."

"Then you were in the war?" I said.

"Oh, yes, yes, sir! I was in the Confederate service. Yes, sir, I 'm a Southerner to the backbone. My grandfather was a ——" (I missed the patronymic), "and commanded St. Augustine."

The name had a foreign sound, and the man's complexion was swarthy, and in all simplicity I asked if he was a Minorcan. I might as well have touched a lighted match to powder. His eyes flashed, and he came round the tail of the cart, gesticulating with his stick.

"Minorcan!" he broke out. "Spain and the island of Minorca are two places, ain't they?"

I admitted meekly that they were.

"You are English, ain't you?" he went on. "You are English, — Yankee born, — ain't you?"

I owned it.

"Well, I 'm Spanish. That ain't Minorcan. My grandfather was a ——, and commanded St. Augustine. He could n't have done that if he had been Minorcan."

By this time he was quieting down a bit. His father remembered the Indian war. The son had heard him tell about it.

"Those were dangerous times," he remarked. "You could n't have been standing out here in the woods then."

"There is no danger here now, is there?" said I.

"No, no, not now." But as he drove along he turned to say that *he* was n't afraid of *any* thing; he was n't that kind of a man. Then, with a final turn, he added, what I could not dispute, "A man's life is always in danger."

After he was gone, I regretted that I had offered no apology for my unintentionally offensive question; but I was so taken by surprise, and so much interested in the man

as a specimen, that I quite forgot my manners till it was too late. One thing I learned: that it is not prudent, in these days, to judge a Southern man's blood, in either sense of the word, by his dress or occupation. This man had brought seven or eight miles a load of wood that might possibly be worth seventy-five cents (I questioned the owner of what looked like just such a load afterward, and found his asking price half a dollar), and for clothing had on a pair of trousers and a blue cotton shirt, the latter full of holes, through which the skin was visible; yet his father was a —— and had "owned niggers."

A still more picturesque figure in this procession of wood-carters was a boy of perhaps ten or eleven. He rode his horse, and was barefooted and barelegged; but he had a cigarette in his mouth, and to each brown heel was fastened an enormous spur. Who was it that infected the world with the foolish and disastrous notion that work and play are two different things? And was it Emerson, or some other wise man, who said that a boy was the true philosopher?

When it came time to think of returning to St. Augustine for dinner, I appreciated

my cracker's friendly warning against losing my way; for though I had hardly so much as entered the woods, and had taken, as I thought, good heed to my steps, I was almost at once in a quandary as to my road. There was no occasion for worry, — with the sun out, and my general course perfectly plain; but here was a fork in the road, and whether to bear to the left or to the right was a simple matter of guess-work. I made the best guess I could, and guessed wrong, as was apparent after a while, when I found the road under deep water for several rods. I objected to wading, and there was no ready way of going round, since the oak and palmetto scrub crowded close up to the roadside, and just here was all but impenetrable. What was still more conclusive, the road was the wrong one, as the inundation proved, and, for aught I could tell, might carry me far out of my course. I turned back, therefore, under the midday sun, and by good luck a second attempt brought me out of the woods very near where I had entered them.

I visited this particular piece of country but once afterward, having in the mean time discovered a better place of the same

sort along the railroad, in the direction of Palatka. There, on a Sunday morning, I heard my first pine-wood sparrow. Time and tune could hardly have been in truer accord. The hour was of the quietest, the strain was of the simplest, and the bird sang as if he were dreaming. For a long time I let him go on without attempting to make certain who he was. He seemed to be rather far off: if I waited his pleasure, he would perhaps move toward me; if I disturbed him, he would probably become silent. So I sat on the end of a sleeper and listened. It was not great music. It made me think of the swamp sparrow; and the swamp sparrow is far from being a great singer. A single prolonged, drawling note (in that respect unlike the swamp sparrow, of course), followed by a succession of softer and sweeter ones, — that was all, when I came to analyze it; but that is no fair description of what I heard. The quality of the song is not there; and it was the quality, the feeling, the soul of it, if I may say what I mean, that made it, in the true sense of a much-abused word, charming.

There could be little doubt that the bird was

a pine-wood sparrow; but such things are not to be taken for granted. Once or twice, indeed, the thought of some unfamiliar warbler had crossed my mind. At last, therefore, as the singer still kept out of sight, I leaped the ditch and pushed into the scrub. Happily I had not far to go; he had been much nearer than I thought. A small bird flew up before me, and dropped almost immediately into a clump of palmetto. I edged toward the spot and waited. Then the song began again, this time directly in front of me, but still far-away-sounding and dreamy. I find that last word in my hasty note penciled at the time, and can think of no other that expresses the effect half so well. I looked and looked, and all at once there sat the bird on a palmetto leaf. Once again he sang, putting up his head. Then he dropped out of sight, and I heard nothing more. I had seen only his head and neck, — enough to show him a sparrow, and almost of necessity the pine-wood sparrow. No other strange member of the finch family was to be looked for in such a place.

On further acquaintance, let me say at once, *Pucæa æstivalis* proved to be a more

versatile singer than the performances of my first bird would have led me to suppose. He varies his tune freely, but always within a pretty narrow compass; as is true, also, of the field sparrow, with whom, as I soon came to feel, he has not a little in common. It is in musical form only that he suggests the swamp sparrow. In tone and spirit, in the qualities of sweetness and expressiveness, he is nearly akin to *Spizella pusilla*. One does for the Southern pine barren what the other does for the Northern berry pasture. And this is high praise; for though in New England we have many singers more brilliant than the field sparrow, we have none that are sweeter, and few that in the long run give more pleasure to sensitive hearers.

I found the pine-wood sparrow afterward in New Smyrna, Port Orange, Sanford, and Tallahassee. So far as I could tell, it was always the same bird; but I shot no specimens, and speak with no authority.[1] Living

[1] Two races of the pine-wood sparrow are recognized by ornithologists, *Pucæa æstivalis* and *P. æstivalis bachmanii*, and both of them have been found in Florida; but, if I understand the matter right, *Pucæa æstivalis* is the common and typical Florida bird.

always in the pine lands, and haunting the dense undergrowth, it is heard a hundred times where it is seen once, — a point greatly in favor of its effectiveness as a musician. Mr. Brewster speaks of it as singing always from an elevated perch, while the birds that I saw in the act of song, a very limited number, were invariably perched low. One that I watched in New Smyrna (one of a small chorus, the others being invisible) sang for a quarter of an hour from a stake or stump which rose perhaps a foot above the dwarf palmetto. It was the same song that I had heard in St. Augustine ; only the birds here were in a livelier mood, and sang *out* instead of *sotto voce*. The long introductory note sounded sometimes as if it were indrawn, and often, if not always, had a considerable burr in it. Once in a while the strain was caught up at the end and sung over again, after the manner of the field sparrow, — one of that bird's prettiest tricks. At other times the song was delivered with full voice, and then repeated almost under the singer's breath. This was done beautifully in the Port Orange flat-woods, the bird being almost at my feet. I had seen him a moment before, and saw him

again half a minute later, but at that instant he was out of sight in the scrub, and seemingly on the ground. This feature of the song, one of its chief merits and its most striking peculiarity, is well described by Mr. Brewster. "Now," he says, "it has a full, bell-like ring that seems to fill the air around; next it is soft and low and inexpressibly tender; now it is clear again, but so modulated that the sound seems to come from a great distance." [1]

Not many other birds, I think (I cannot recall any), habitually vary their song in this manner. Other birds sing almost inaudibly at times, especially in the autumnal season. Even the brown thrasher, whose ordinary performance is so full-voiced, not to say boisterous, will sometimes soliloquize, or seem to soliloquize, in the faintest of undertones. The formless autumnal warble of the song sparrow is familiar to every one. And in this connection I remember, and am not likely ever to forget, a winter wren who favored me with what I thought the most bewitching bit of vocalism to which I had

[1] *Bulletin of the Nuttall Ornithological Club*, vol. vii. p. 98.

ever listened. He was in the bushes close at my side, in the Franconia Notch, and delivered his whole song, with all its customary length, intricacy, and speed, in a tone — a whisper, I may almost say — that ran along the very edge of silence. The unexpected proximity of a stranger may have had something to do with his conduct, as it often appears to have with the thrasher's; but, however that may be, the cases are not parallel with that of the pine-wood sparrow, inasmuch as the latter bird not merely sings under his breath on special occasions, whether on account of the nearness of a listener or for any other reason, but in his ordinary singing uses louder and softer tones interchangeably, almost exactly as human singers and players do; as if, in the practice of his art, he had learned to appreciate, consciously or unconsciously (and practice naturally goes before theory), the expressive value of what I believe is called musical dynamics.

I spent many half-days in the pine lands (how gladly now would I spend another!), but never got far into them. ("Into their depths," my pen was on the point of making me say; but that would have been a false

note. The flat-woods have no "depths.") Whether I followed the railway, — in many respects a pretty satisfactory method, — or some roundabout, aimless carriage road, a mile or two was generally enough. The country offers no temptation to pedestrian feats, nor does the imagination find its account in going farther and farther. For the reader is not to think of the flat-woods as in the least resembling a Northern forest, which at every turn opens before the visitor and beckons him forward. Beyond and behind, and on either side, the pine-woods are ever the same. It is this monotony, by the bye, this utter absence of landmarks, that makes it so unsafe for the stranger to wander far from the beaten track. The sand is deep, the sun is hot; one place is as good as another. What use, then, to tire yourself? And so, unless the traveler is going somewhere, as I seldom was, he is continually stopping by the way. Now a shady spot entices him to put down his umbrella, — for there *is* a shady spot, here and there, even in a Florida pine-wood; or blossoms are to be plucked; or a butterfly, some gorgeous and nameless creature, brightens the wood

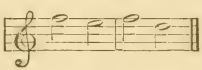
as it passes; or a bird is singing; or an eagle is soaring far overhead, and must be watched out of sight; or a buzzard, with upturned wings, floats suspiciously near the wanderer, as if with sinister intent (buzzard shadows are a regular feature of the flat-wood landscape, just as cloud shadows are in a mountainous country); or a snake lies stretched out in the sun, — a "whip snake," perhaps, that frightens the unwary stroller by the amazing swiftness with which it runs away from him; or some strange invisible insect is making uncanny noises in the underbrush. One of my recollections of the railway woods at St. Augustine is of a cricket, or locust, or something else, — I never saw it, — that amused me often with a formless rattling or drumming sound. I could think of nothing but a boy's first lesson upon the bones, the rhythm of the beats was so comically mistimed and bungled.

One fine morning, — it was the 18th of February, — I had gone down the railroad a little farther than usual, attracted by the encouraging appearance of a swampy patch of rather large deciduous trees. Some of them, I remember, were red maples, already

full of handsome, high-colored fruit. As I drew near, I heard indistinctly from among them what might have been the song of a black-throated green warbler, a bird that would have made a valued addition to my Florida list, especially at that early date.[1] No sooner was the song repeated, however, than I saw that I had been deceived; it was something I had never heard before. But it certainly had much of the black-throated green's quality, and without question was the note of a warbler of some kind. What a shame if the bird should give me the slip! Meanwhile, it kept on singing at brief intervals, and was not so far away but that, with my glass, I should be well able to make it out, if only I could once get my eyes on it. That was the difficulty. Something stirred among the branches. Yes, a yellow-throated warbler (*Dendroica dominica*), a bird of which I had seen my first specimens, all of them silent, during the last eight days. Probably he was the singer. I hoped so, at any rate. That would be an ideal case of a

1 As it was, I did not find *Dendroica virens* in Florida. On my way home, in Atlanta, April 20, I saw one bird in a dooryard shade-tree.

beautiful bird with a song to match. I kept him under my glass, and presently the strain was repeated, but not by him. Then it ceased, and I was none the wiser. Perhaps I never should be. It was indeed a shame. Such a *taking* song; so simple, and yet so pretty, and so thoroughly distinctive. I wrote it down thus: *tee-koi*, *tee-koo*, — two couplets, the first syllable of each a little emphasized and dwelt upon, not drawled, and a little higher in pitch than its fellow. Perhaps it might be expressed thus: —



I cannot profess to be sure of that, however, nor have I unqualified confidence in the adequacy of musical notation, no matter how skillfully employed, to convey a truthful idea of any bird song.

The affair remained a mystery till, in Daytona, nine days afterward, the same notes were heard again, this time in lower trees that did not stand in deep water. Then it transpired that my mysterious warbler was not a warbler at all, but the Carolina chickadee. That was an outcome quite unexpected,

although I now remembered that chickadees were in or near the St. Augustine swamp; and what was more to the purpose, I could now discern some relationship between the *tee-koi*, *tee-koo* (or, as I now wrote it, *see-toi*, *see-too*), and the familiar so-called phœbe whistle of the black-capped titmouse. The Southern bird, I am bound to acknowledge, is much the more accomplished singer of the two. Sometimes he repeats the second dissyllable, making six notes in all. At other times he breaks out with a characteristic volley of fine chickadee notes, and runs without a break into the *see-toi*, *see-too*, with a highly pleasing effect. Then if, on the top of this, he doubles the *see-too*, we have a really prolonged and elaborate musical effort, quite putting into the shade our New England bird's *hear*, *hear me*, sweet and welcome as that always is.

The Southern chickadee, it should be said, is not to be distinguished from its Northern relative — in the bush, I mean — except by its notes. It is slightly smaller, like Southern birds in general, but is practically identical in plumage. Apart from its song, what most impressed me was its scarcity. It was

found, sooner or later, wherever I went, I believe, but always in surprisingly small numbers, and I saw only one nest. That was built in a roadside china-tree in Tallahassee, and contained young ones (April 17), as was clear from the conduct of its owners.

It must not be supposed that I left St. Augustine without another search for my unknown "warbler." The very next morning found me again at the swamp, where for at least an hour I sat and listened. I heard no *tee-koi*, *tee-koo*, but was rewarded twice over for my walk. In the first place, before reaching the swamp, I found the third of my flat-wood novelties, the red-cockaded woodpecker. As had happened with the nuthatch and the sparrow, I heard him before seeing him: first some notes, which by themselves would hardly have suggested a woodpecker origin, and then a noise of hammering. Taken together, the two sounds left little doubt as to their author; and presently I saw him, — or rather them, for there were two birds. I learned nothing about them, either then or afterwards (I saw perhaps eight individuals during my ten weeks' visit), but it was worth something barely to

see and hear them. Henceforth *Dryobates borealis* is a bird, and not merely a name. This, as I have said, was among the pines, before reaching the swamp. In the swamp itself, there suddenly appeared from somewhere, as if by magic (a dramatic entrance is not without its value, even out-of-doors), a less novel but far more impressive figure, a pileated woodpecker; a truly splendid fellow, with the scarlet cheek-patches. When I caught sight of him, he stood on one of the upper branches of a tall pine, looking wonderfully alert and wide-awake; now stretching out his scrawny neck, and now drawing it in again, his long crest all the while erect and flaming. After a little he dropped into the underbrush, out of which came at intervals a succession of raps. I would have given something to have had him under my glass just then, for I had long felt curious to see him in the act of chiseling out those big, oblong, clean-cut, sharp-angled "peck-holes" which, close to the base of the tree, make so common and notable a feature of Vermont and New Hampshire forests; but, though I did my best, I could not find him, till all at once he came up again and took to

a tall pine, — the tallest in the wood, — where he pranced about for a while, striking sundry picturesque but seemingly aimless attitudes, and then made off for good. All in all, he was a wild-looking bird, if ever I saw one.

I was no sooner in St. Augustine, of course, than my eyes were open for wild flowers. Perhaps I felt a little disappointed. Certainly the land was not ablaze with color. In the grass about the old fort there was plenty of the yellow oxalis and the creeping white houstonia; and from a crevice in the wall, out of reach, leaned a stalk of goldenrod in full bloom. The reader may smile, if he will, but this last flower was a surprise and a stumbling-block. A vernal goldenrod! Dr. Chapman's Flora made no mention of such an anomaly. Sow thistles, too, looked strangely anachronistic. I had never thought of them as harbingers of springtime. The truth did not break upon me till a week or so afterward. Then, on the way to the beach at Daytona, where the pleasant peninsula road traverses a thick forest of short-leaved pines, every tree of which leans heavily inland at the same angle ("the leaning pines of Daytona," I always said to myself,

as I passed), I came upon some white beggar's-ticks, — like daisies; and as I stopped to see what they were, I noticed the presence of ripe seeds. The plant had been in flower a long time. And then I laughed at my own dullness. It fairly deserved a medal. As if, even in Massachusetts, autumnal flowers — the groundsel, at least — did not sometimes persist in blossoming far into the winter! A day or two after this, I saw a mullein stalk still presenting arms, as it were (the mullein always looks the soldier to me), with one bright flower. If I had found *that* in St. Augustine, I flatter myself I should have been less easily fooled.

There were no such last-year relics in the flat-woods, so far as I remember, but spring blossoms were beginning to make their appearance there by the middle of February, particularly along the railroad, — violets in abundance (*Viola cucullata*), dwarf orange-colored dandelions (*Krigia*), the Judas-tree, or redbud, St. Peter's-wort, blackberry, the yellow star-flower (*Hypoxis juncea*), and butterworts. I recall, too, in a swampy spot, a fine fresh tuft of the golden club, with its gorgeous yellow spadix, — a plant that I had

never seen in bloom before, although I had once admired a Cape Cod "hollow" full of the rank tropical leaves. St. Peter's-wort, a low shrub, thrives everywhere in the pine barrens, and, without being especially attractive, its rather sparse yellow flowers — not unlike the St. John's-wort — do something to enliven the general waste. The butterworts are beauties, and true children of the spring. I picked my first ones, which by chance were of the smaller purple species (*Pinguicula pumila*), on my way down from the woods, on a moist bank. At that moment a white man came up the road. "What do you call this flower?" said I. "Valentine's flower," he answered at once. "Ah," said I, "because it is in bloom on St. Valentine's Day, I suppose?" "No, sir," he said. "Do you speak Spanish?" I had to shake my head. "Because I could explain it better in Spanish," he continued, as if by way of apology; but he went on in perfectly good English: "If you put one of them under your pillow, and think of some one you would like very much to see, — some one who has been dead a long time, — you will be likely to dream of him. It is a very pretty flower," he added.

And so it is ; hardly prettier, however, to my thinking, than the blossoms of the early creeping blackberry (*Rubus trivialis*). With them I fairly fell in love : true white roses, I called them, each with its central ring of dark purplish stamens ; as beautiful as the cloudberry, which once, ten years before, I had found on the summit of Mount Clinton, in New Hampshire, and refused to believe a *Rubus*, though Dr. Gray's key led me to that genus again and again. There *is* something in a name, say what you will.

Some weeks later, and a little farther south, — in the flat-woods behind New Smyrna, — I saw other flowers, but never anything of that tropical exuberance at which the average Northern tourist expects to find himself staring. Boggy places were full of blue iris (the common *Iris versicolor* of New England, but of ranker growth), and here and there a pool was yellow with bladderwort. I was taken also with the larger and taller (yellow) butterwort, which I used never to see as I went through the woods in the morning, but was sure to find standing in the tall dry grass along the border of the sandy road, here one and

there one, on my return at noon. In similar places grew a "yellow daisy" (*Leptopoda*), a single big head, of a deep color, at the top of a leafless stem. It seemed to be one of the most abundant of Florida spring flowers, but I could not learn that it went by any distinctive vernacular name. Beside the railway track were blue-eyed grass and pipewort, and a dainty blue lobelia (*L. Feayana*), with once in a while an extremely pretty coreopsis, having a purple centre, and scarcely to be distinguished from one that is common in gardens. No doubt the advancing season brings an increasing wealth of such beauty to the flat-woods. No doubt, too, I missed the larger half of what might have been found even at the time of my visit; for I made no pretense of doing any real botanical work, having neither the time nor the equipment. The birds kept me busy, for the most part, when the country itself did not absorb my attention.

More interesting, and a thousand times more memorable, than any flower or bird was the pine barren itself. I have given no true idea of it, I am perfectly aware: open,

parklike, flooded with sunshine, level as a floor. "What heartache," Lanier breaks out, poor exile, dying of consumption, — "what heartache! Ne'er a hill!" A dreary country to ride through, hour after hour; an impossible country to live in, but most pleasant for a half-day winter stroll. Notwithstanding I never went far into it, as I have already said, I had always a profound sensation of remoteness; as if I might go on forever, and be no farther away.

Yet even here I had more than one reminder that the world is a small place. I met a burly negro in a cart, and fell into talk with him about the Florida climate, an endless topic, out of which a cynical traveler may easily extract almost endless amusement. How about the summers here? I inquired. Were they really as paradisaical (I did not use that word) as some reports would lead one to suppose? The man smiled, as if he had heard something like that before. He did not think the Florida summer a dream of delight, even on the east coast. "I'm tellin' you the truth, sah; the mosquiters an' sandflies is awful." Was he born here? I asked. No; he came from B——, Ala-

bama. Everybody in eastern Florida came from somewhere, as well as I could make out. "Oh, from B——," said I. "Did you know Mr. W——, of the —— Iron Works?" He smiled again. "Yes, sah; I used to work for him. He 's a nice man." He spoke the truth that time beyond a peradventure. He was healthier here than in the other place, he thought, and wages were higher; but he liked the other place better "for pleasure." It was an odd coincidence, was it not, that I should meet in this solitude a man who knew the only citizen of Alabama with whom I was ever acquainted.

At another time I fell in with an oldish colored man, who, like myself, had taken to the woods for a quiet Sunday stroll. *He* was from Mississippi, he told me. Oh, yes, he remembered the war; he was a slave, twenty-one years old, when it broke out. To his mind, the present generation of "niggers" were a pretty poor lot, for all their "edication." He had seen them crowding folks off the sidewalk, and puffing smoke in their faces. All of which was nothing new; I had found that story more or less common among negroes of his age. He did n't believe much

in "edication;" but when I asked if he thought the blacks were better off in slavery times, he answered quickly, "I 'd rather be a free man, *I* had." He was n't married; he had plenty to do to take care of himself. We separated, he going one way and I the other; but he turned to ask, with much seriousness (the reader must remember that this was only three months after a national election), "Do you think they 'll get free trade?" "Truly," said I to myself, "'the world is too much with us.' Even in the flat-woods there is no escaping the tariff question." But I answered, in what was meant to be a reassuring tone, "Not yet awhile. Some time." "I hope not," he said, — as if liberty to buy and sell would be a dreadful blow to a man living in a shanty in a Florida pine barren! He was taking the matter rather too much to heart, perhaps; but surely it was encouraging to see such a man interested in broad economical questions, and I realized as never before the truth of what the newspapers so continually tell us, that political campaigns are educational.

BESIDE THE MARSH.

I AM sitting upon the upland bank of a narrow winding creek. Before me is a sea of grass, brown and green of many shades. To the north the marsh is bounded by live-oak woods, — a line with numberless indentations, — beyond which runs the Matanzas River, as I know by the passing and repassing of sails behind the trees. Eastward are sand-hills, dazzling white in the sun, with a ragged green fringe along their tops. Then comes a stretch of the open sea, and then, more to the south, St. Anastasia Island, with its tall black-and-white lighthouse and the cluster of lower buildings at its base. Small sailboats, and now and then a tiny steamer, pass up and down the river to and from St. Augustine.

A delicious south wind is blowing (it is the 15th of February), and I sit in the shade of a cedar-tree and enjoy the air and the scene. A contrast, this, to the frozen world I was living in, less than a week ago.

As I approached the creek, a single spotted sandpiper was teetering along the edge of the water, and the next moment a big blue heron rose just beyond him and went flapping away to the middle of the marsh. Now, an hour afterward, he is still standing there, towering above the tall grass. Once when I turned that way I saw, as I thought, a stake, and then something moved upon it, — a bird of some kind. And what an enormous beak! I raised my field-glass. It was the heron. His body was the post, and his head was the bird. Meanwhile, the sandpiper has stolen away, I know not when or where. He must have omitted the *tweet, tweet*, with which ordinarily he signalizes his flight. He is the first of his kind that I have seen during my brief stay in these parts.

Now a multitude of crows pass over; fish crows, I think they must be, from their small size and their strange, ridiculous voices. And now a second great blue heron comes in sight, and keeps on over the marsh and over the live-oak wood, on his way to the San Sebastian marshes, or some point still more remote. A fine show he makes, with his wide expanse of wing, and his feet drawn up and standing

out behind him. Next a marsh hawk in brown plumage comes skimming over the grass. This way and that he swerves in ever graceful lines. For one to whom ease and grace come by nature, even the chase of meadow mice is an act of beauty, while another goes awkwardly though in pursuit of a goddess.

Several times I have noticed a kingfisher hovering above the grass (so it looks, but no doubt he is over an arm of the creek), striking the air with quick strokes, and keeping his head pointed downward, after the manner of a tern. Then he disappeared while I was looking at something else. Now I remark him sitting motionless upon the top of a post in the midst of the marsh.

A third blue heron appears, and he too flies over without stopping. Number One still keeps his place; through the glass I can see him dressing his feathers with his clumsy beak. The lively strain of a white-eyed vireo, pertest of songsters, comes to me from somewhere on my right, and the soft chipping of myrtle warblers is all but incessant. I look up from my paper to see a turkey buzzard sailing majestically northward. I watch him

till he fades in the distance. Not once does he flap his wings, but sails and sails, going with the wind, yet turning again and again to rise against it, — helping himself thus to its adverse, uplifting pressure in the place of wing-strokes, perhaps, — and passing onward all the while in beautiful circles. He, too, scavenger though he is, has a genius for being graceful. One might almost be willing to be a buzzard, to fly like that!

The kingfisher and the heron are still at their posts. An exquisite yellow butterfly, of a sort strange to my Yankee eyes, flits past, followed by a red admiral. The marsh hawk is on the wing again, and while looking at him I descry a second hawk, too far away to be made out. Now the air behind me is dark with crows, — a hundred or two, at least, circling over the low cedars. Some motive they have for all their clamor, but it passes my owlish wisdom to guess what it can be. A fourth blue heron appears, and drops into the grass out of sight.

Between my feet is a single blossom of the yellow oxalis, the only flower to be seen; and very pretty it is, each petal with an orange spot at the base.

Another buzzard, another marsh hawk, another yellow butterfly, and then a smaller one, darker, almost orange. It passes too quickly over the creek and away. The marsh hawk comes nearer, and I see the strong yellow tinge of his plumage, especially underneath. He will grow handsomer as he grows older. A pity the same could not be true of men. Behind me are sharp cries of titlarks. From the direction of the river come frequent reports of guns. Somebody is doing his best to be happy! All at once I prick up my ears. From the grass just across the creek rises the brief, hurried song of a long-billed marsh wren. So *he* is in Florida, is he? Already I have heard confused noises which I feel sure are the work of rails of some kind. No doubt there is abundant life concealed in those acres on acres of close grass.

The heron and the kingfisher are still quiet. Their morning hunt was successful, and for to-day Fate cannot harm them. A buzzard, with nervous, rustling beats, goes directly above the low cedar under which I am resting.

At last, after a siesta of two hours, the heron has changed his place. I looked up

just in season to see him sweeping over the grass, into which he dropped the next instant. The tide is falling. The distant sand-hills are winking in the heat, but the breeze is deliciously cool, the very perfection of temperature, if a man is to sit still in the shade. It is eleven o'clock. I have a mile to go in the hot sun, and turn away. But first I sweep the line once more with my glass. Yonder to the south are two more blue herons standing in the grass. Perhaps there are more still. I sweep the line. Yes, far, far away I can see four heads in a row. Heads and necks rise above the grass. But so far away! Are they birds, or only posts made alive by my imagination? I look again. I believe I was deceived. They are nothing but stakes. See how in a row they stand. I smile at myself. Just then one of them moves, and another is pulled down suddenly into the grass. I smile again. "Ten great blue herons," I say to myself.

All this has detained me, and meantime the kingfisher has taken wing and gone noisily up the creek. The marsh hawk appears once more. A killdeer's sharp, rasping note — a familiar sound in St. Augustine — comes

from I know not where. A procession of more than twenty black vultures passes over my head. I can see their feet drawn up under them. My own I must use in plodding homeward.

ON THE BEACH AT DAYTONA.

THE first eight days of my stay in Daytona were so delightful that I felt as if I had never before seen fine weather, even in my dreams. My east window looked across the Halifax River to the peninsula woods. Beyond them was the ocean. Immediately after breakfast, therefore, I made toward the north bridge, and in half an hour or less was on the beach. Beaches are much the same the world over, and there is no need to describe this one — Silver Beach, I think I heard it called — except to say that it is broad, hard, and, for a pleasure-seeker's purpose, endless. It is backed by low sand-hills covered with impenetrable scrub, — oak and palmetto, — beyond which is a dense growth of short-leaved pines. Perfect weather, a perfect beach, and no throng of people: here were the conditions of happiness; and here for eight days I found it. The ocean itself was a solitude. Day after day not a sail was in sight. Looking up

and down the beach, I could usually see somewhere in the distance a carriage or two, and as many foot passengers; but I often walked a mile, or sat for half an hour, without being within hail of any one. Never were airs more gentle or colors more exquisite.

As for birds, they were surprisingly scarce, but never wanting altogether. If everything else failed, a few fish-hawks were sure to be in sight. I watched them at first with eager interest. Up and down the beach they went, each by himself, with heads pointed downward, scanning the shallow water. Often they stopped in their course, and by means of laborious flappings held themselves poised over a certain spot. Then, perhaps, they set their wings and shot downward clean under water. If the plunge was unsuccessful, they shook their feathers dry and were ready to begin again. They had the fisherman's gift. The second, and even the third attempt might fail, but no matter; it was simply a question of time and patience. If the fish was caught, their first concern seemed to be to shift their hold upon it, till its head pointed to the front.

That done, they shook themselves vigorously and started landward, the shining white victim wriggling vainly in the clutch of the talons. I took it for granted that they retired with their quarry to some secluded spot on the peninsula, till one day I happened to be standing upon a sand-hill as one passed overhead. Then I perceived that he kept on straight across the peninsula and the river. More than once, however, I saw one of them in no haste to go inland. On my second visit, a hawk came circling about my head, carrying a fish. I was surprised at the action, but gave it no second thought, nor once imagined that he was making me his protector, till suddenly a large bird dropped rather awkwardly upon the sand, not far before me. He stood for an instant on his long, ungainly legs, and then, showing a white head and a white tail, rose with a fish in his talons, and swept away landward out of sight. Here was the osprey's parasite, the bald eagle, for which I had been on the watch. Meantime, the hawk too had disappeared. Whether it was his fish which the eagle had picked up (having missed it in the air) I cannot say. I did

not see it fall, and knew nothing of the eagle's presence until he fluttered to the beach.

Some days later, I saw the big thief — emblem of American liberty — play his sharp game to the finish. I was crossing the bridge, and by accident turned and looked upward. (By accident, I say, but I was always doing it.) High in the air were two birds, one chasing the other, — a fish-hawk and a young eagle with dark head and tail. The hawk meant to save his dinner if he could. Round and round he went, ascending at every turn, his pursuer after him hotly. For aught I could see, he stood a good chance of escape, till all at once another pair of wings swept into the field of my glass.

> "A third is in the race! Who is the third,
> Speeding away swift as the eagle bird?"

It *was* an eagle, an adult, with head and tail white. Only once more the osprey circled. The odds were against him, and he let go the fish. As it fell, the old eagle swooped after it, missed it, swooped again, and this time, long before it could reach the water, had it fast in his claws. Then

off he went, the younger one in pursuit. They passed out of sight behind the trees of an island, one close upon the other, and I do not know how the controversy ended; but I would have wagered a trifle on the old white-head, the bird of Washington.

The scene reminded me of one I had witnessed in Georgia a fortnight before, on my way south. The train stopped at a backwoods station; some of the passengers gathered upon the steps of the car, and the usual bevy of young negroes came alongside. "Stand on my head for a nickel?" said one. A passenger put his hand into his pocket; the boy did as he had promised, — in no very professional style, be it said, — and with a grin stretched out his hand. The nickel glistened in the sun, and on the instant a second boy sprang forward, snatched it out of the sand, and made off in triumph amid the hilarious applause of his fellows. The acrobat's countenance indicated a sense of injustice, and I had no doubt that my younger eagle was similarly affected. "Where is our boasted honor among thieves?" I imagined him asking. The bird of freedom is a great bird, and the

land of the free is a great country. Here, let us hope, the parallel ends. Whether on the banks of Newfoundland or elsewhere, it cannot be that the great republic would ever snatch a fish that did not belong to it.

I admired the address of the fish-hawks until I saw the gannets. Then I perceived that the hawks, with all their practice, were no better than landlubbers. The gannets kept farther out at sea. Sometimes a scattered flock remained in sight for the greater part of a forenoon. With their long, sharp wings and their outstretched necks, — like loons, but with a different flight, — they were rakish-looking customers. Sometimes from a great height, sometimes from a lower, sometimes at an incline, and sometimes vertically, they plunged into the water, and after an absence of some seconds, as it seemed, came up and rested upon the surface. They were too far away to be closely observed, and for a time I did not feel certain what they were. The larger number were in dark plumage, and it was not till a white one appeared that I said with assurance, "Gannets!" With the bright sun on him, he was indeed a splendid bird,

snowy white, with the tips of his wings jet black. If he would have come inshore like the ospreys, I think I should never have tired of his evolutions.

The gannets showed themselves only now and then, but the brown pelicans were an every-day sight. I had found them first on the beach at St. Augustine. Here at Daytona they never alighted on the sand, and seldom in the water. They were always flying up or down the beach, and, unless turned from their course by the presence of some suspicious object, they kept straight on just above the breakers, rising and falling with the waves; now appearing above them, and now out of sight in the trough of the sea. Sometimes a single bird passed, but commonly they were in small flocks. Once I saw seventeen together, — a pretty long procession; for, whatever their number, they went always in Indian file. Evidently some dreadful thing would happen if two pelicans should ever travel abreast. It was partly this unusual order of march, I suspect, which gave such an air of preternatural gravity to their movements. It was impossible to see even two of them go by without feeling

almost as if I were in church. First, both birds flew a rod or two with slow and stately flappings; then, as if at some preconcerted signal, both set their wings and scaled for about the same distance; then they resumed their wing strokes; and so on, till they passed out of sight. I never heard them utter a sound, or saw them make a movement of any sort (I speak of what I saw at Daytona) except to fly straight on, one behind another. If church ceremonials are still open to amendment, I would suggest, in no spirit of irreverence, that a study of pelican processionals would be certain to yield edifying results. Nothing done in any cathedral could be more solemn. Indeed, their solemnity was so great that I came at last to find it almost ridiculous; but that, of course, was only from a want of faith on the part of the beholder. The birds, as I say, were *brown* pelicans. Had they been of the other species, in churchly white and black, the ecclesiastical effect would perhaps have been heightened, though such a thing is hardly conceivable.

Some beautiful little gulls, peculiarly dainty in their appearance ("Bonaparte's gulls," they are called in books, but "surf gulls"

would be a prettier and apter name), were also given to flying along the breakers, but in a manner very different from the pelicans'; as different, I may say, as the birds themselves. They, too, moved steadily onward, north or south as the case might be, but fed as they went, dropping into the shallow water between the incoming waves, and rising again to escape the next breaker. The action was characteristic and graceful, though often somewhat nervous and hurried. I noticed that the birds commonly went by twos, but that may have been nothing more than a coincidence. Beside these small surf gulls, never at all numerous, I usually saw a few terns, and now and then one or two rather large gulls, which, as well as I could make out, must have been the ring-billed. It was a strange beach, I thought, where fish-hawks invariably outnumbered both gulls and terns.

Of beach birds, properly so called, I saw none but sanderlings. They were no novelty, but I always stopped to look at them; busy as ants, running in a body down the beach after a receding wave, and the next moment scampering back again with all speed before an incoming one. They tolerated no near

approach, but were at once on the wing for a long flight up or down the coast, looking like a flock of snow-white birds as they turned their under parts to the sun in rising above the breakers. Their manner of feeding, with the head pitched forward, and a quick, eager movement, as if they had eaten nothing for days, and were fearful that their present bit of good fortune would not last, is strongly characteristic, so that they can be recognized a long way off. As I have said, they were the only true beach birds; but I rarely failed to see one or two great blue herons playing that rôle. The first one filled me with surprise. I had never thought of finding him in such a place; but there he stood, and before I was done with Florida beaches I had come to look upon him as one of their most constant *habitués*. In truth, this largest of the herons is well-nigh omnipresent in Florida. Wherever there is water, fresh or salt, he is certain to be met with sooner or later; and even in the driest place, if you stay there long enough, you will be likely to see him passing overhead, on his way to the water, which is nowhere far off. On the beach, as everywhere else, he is a model

of patience. To the best of my recollection, I never saw him catch a fish there; and I really came to think it pathetic, the persistency with which he would stand, with the water half way to his knees, leaning forward expectantly toward the breakers, as if he felt that this great and generous ocean, which had so many fish to spare, could not fail to send him, at last, the morsel for which he was waiting.

But indeed I was not long in perceiving that the Southern climate made patience a comparatively easy virtue, and fishing, by a natural consequence, a favorite avocation. Day after day, as I crossed the bridges on my way to and from the beach, the same men stood against the rail, holding their poles over the river. They had an air of having been there all winter. I came to recognize them, though I knew none of their names. One was peculiarly happy looking, almost radiant, with an educated face, and only one hand. His disability hindered him, no doubt. I never saw so much as a sheep-head or a drum lying at his feet. But inwardly, I felt sure, his luck was good. Another was older, fifty at least, sleek and well dressed. He spoke

pleasantly enough, if I addressed him; otherwise he attended strictly to business. Every day he was there, morning and afternoon. He, I think, had better fortune than any of the others. Once I saw him land a large and handsome "speckled trout," to the unmistakable envy of his brother anglers. Still a third was a younger man, with a broad-brimmed straw hat and a taciturn habit; no less persevering than Number Two, perhaps, but far less successful. I marveled a little at their enthusiasm (there were many beside these), and they, in their turn, did not altogether conceal their amusement at the foibles of a man, still out of Bedlam, who walked and walked and walked, always with a field-glass protruding from his side pocket, which now and then he pulled out suddenly and leveled at nothing. It is one of the merciful ameliorations of this present evil world that men are thus mutually entertaining.

These anglers were to be congratulated. Ordered South by their physicians, — as most of them undoubtedly were, — compelled to spend the winter away from friends and business, amid all the discomforts of Southern

hotels, they were happy in having at least one thing which they loved to do. Blessed is the invalid who has an outdoor hobby. One man, whom I met more than once in my beach rambles, seemed to devote himself to bathing, running, and walking. He looked like an athlete; I heard him tell how far he could run without getting "winded;" and as he sprinted up and down the sand in his scanty bathing costume, I always found him a pleasing spectacle. Another runner there gave me a half-hour of amusement that turned at the last to a feeling of almost painful sympathy. He was not in bathing costume, nor did he look particularly athletic. He was teaching his young lady to ride a bicycle, and his pupil was at that most interesting stage of a learner's career when the machine is beginning to steady itself. With a very little assistance she went bravely, while at the same time the young man felt it necessary not to let go his hold upon her for more than a few moments at once. At all events, he must be with her at the turn. She plied the pedals with vigor, and he ran alongside or behind, as best he could; she excited, and he out of breath. Back and forth they went,

and it was a relief to me when finally he took off his coat. I left him still panting in his fair one's wake, and hoped it would not turn out a case of "love's labor 's lost." Let us hope, too, that he was not an invalid.

While speaking of these my companions in idleness, I may as well mention an older man, — a rural philosopher, he seemed, — whom I met again and again, always in search of shells. He was from Indiana, he told me with agreeable garrulity. His grandchildren would like the shells. He had perhaps made a mistake in coming so far south. It was pretty warm, he thought, and he feared the change would be too great when he went home again. If a man's lungs were bad, he ought to go to a warm place, of course. *He* came for his stomach, which was now pretty well, — a capital proof of the superior value of fresh air over "proper" food in dyspeptic troubles; for if there is anywhere in the world a place in which a delicate stomach would fare worse than in a Southern hotel, — of the second or third class, — may none but my enemies ever find it. Seashell collecting is not a panacea. For a disease like old age, for instance, it might prove to be an

alleviation rather than a cure; but taken long enough, and with a sufficient mixture of enthusiasm, — a true *sine qua non*, — it will be found efficacious, I believe, in all ordinary cases of dyspepsia.

My Indiana man was far from being alone in his cheerful pursuit. If strangers, men or women, met me on the beach and wished to say something more than good-morning, they were sure to ask, "Have you found any pretty shells?" One woman was a collector of a more businesslike turn. She had brought a camp-stool, and when I first saw her in the distance was removing her shoes, and putting on rubber boots. Then she moved her stool into the surf, sat upon it with a tin pail beside her, and, leaning forward over the water, fell to doing something, — I could not tell what. She was so industrious that I did not venture to disturb her, as I passed; but an hour or two afterward I overtook her going homeward across the peninsula with her invalid husband, and she showed me her pail full of the tiny coquina clams, which she said were very nice for soup, as indeed I knew. Some days later, I found a man collecting them for the market, with

the help of a horse and a cylindrical wire roller. With his trousers rolled to his knees, he waded in the surf, and shoveled the incoming water and sand into the wire roller through an aperture left for that purpose. Then he closed the aperture, and drove the horse back and forth through the breakers till the clams were washed clear of the sand, after which he poured them out into a shallow tray like a long bread-pan, and transferred them from that to a big bag. I came up just in time to see them in the tray, bright with all the colors of the rainbow. "Will you hold the bag open?" he said. I was glad to help (it was perhaps the only useful ten minutes that I passed in Florida); and so, counting quart by quart, he dished them into it. There were thirty odd quarts, but he wanted a bushel and a quarter, and again took up the shovel. The clams themselves were not canned and shipped, he said, but only the "juice."

Many rudely built cottages stood on the sand-hills just behind the beach, especially at the points, a mile or so apart, where the two Daytona bridge roads come out of the scrub; and one day, while walking up the

beach to Ormond, I saw before me a much more elaborate Queen Anne house. Fancifully but rather neatly painted, and with a stable to match, it looked like an exotic. As I drew near, its venerable owner was at work in front of it, shoveling a path through the sand, — just as, at that moment (February 24), thousands of Yankee householders were shoveling paths through the snow, which then was reported by the newspapers to be seventeen inches deep in the streets of Boston. His reverend air and his long black coat proclaimed him a clergyman past all possibility of doubt. He seemed to have got to heaven before death, the place was so attractive; but being still in a body terrestrial, he may have found the meat market rather distant, and mosquitoes and sand-flies sometimes a plague. As I walked up the beach, he drove by me in an open wagon with a hired man. They kept on till they came to a log which had been cast up by the sea, and evidently had been sighted from the house. The hired man lifted it into the wagon, and they drove back, — quite a stirring adventure, I imagined; an event to date from, at the very least.

The smaller cottages were nearly all empty at that season. At different times I made use of many of them, when the sun was hot, or I had been long afoot. Once I was resting thus on a flight of front steps, when a three-seated carriage came down the beach and pulled up opposite. The driver wished to ask me a question, I thought; no doubt I looked very much at home. From the day I had entered Florida, every one I met had seemed to know me intuitively for a New Englander, and most of them — I could not imagine how — had divined that I came from Boston. It gratified me to believe that I was losing a little of my provincial manner, under the influence of more extended travel. But my pride had a sudden fall. The carriage stopped, as I said; but instead of inquiring the way, the driver alighted, and all the occupants of the carriage proceeded to do the same, — eight women, with baskets and sundries. It was time for me to be starting. I descended the steps, and pulled off my hat to the first comer, who turned out to be the proprietor of the establishment. With a gracious smile, she hoped they were "not frightening me away." She and her friends

had come for a day's picnic at the cottage. Things being as they were (eight women), she could hardly invite me to share the festivities, and, with my best apology for the intrusion, I withdrew.

Of one building on the sand-hills I have peculiarly pleasant recollections. It was not a cottage, but had evidently been put up as a public resort; especially, as I inferred, for Sunday-school or parish picnics. It was furnished with a platform for speech-making (is there any foolishness that men will not commit on sea beaches and mountain tops?), and, what was more to my purpose, was open on three sides. I passed a good deal of time there, first and last, and once it sheltered me from a drenching shower of an hour or two. The lightning was vivid, and the rain fell in sheets. In the midst of the blackness and commotion, a single tern, ghostly white, flew past, and toward the close a bunch of sanderlings came down the edge of the breakers, still looking for something to eat. The only other living things in sight were two young fellows, who had improved the opportunity to try a dip in the surf. Their color indicated that they were

not yet hardened to open-air bathing, and from their actions it was evident that they found the ocean cool. They were wet enough before they were done, but it was mostly with fresh water. Probably they took no harm; but I am moved to remark, in passing, that I sometimes wondered how generally physicians who order patients to Florida for the winter caution them against imprudent exposure. To me, who am no doctor, it seemed none too safe for young women with consumptive tendencies to be out sailing in open boats on winter evenings, no matter how warm the afternoon had been, while I saw one case where a surf bath taken by such an invalid was followed by a day of prostration and fever. "We who live here," said a resident, "don't think the water is warm enough yet; but for these Northern folks it is a great thing to go into the surf in February, and you can't keep them out."

The rows of cottages of which I have spoken were in one sense a detriment to the beach; but on the whole, and in their present deserted condition, I found them an advantage. It was easy enough to walk away from them, if a man wanted the feel-

ing of utter solitude (the beach extends from Matanzas Inlet to Mosquito Inlet, thirty-five miles, more or less); while at other times they not only furnished shadow and a seat, but, with the paths and little clearings behind them, were an attraction to many birds. Here I found my first Florida jays. They sat on the chimney-tops and ridgepoles, and I was rejoiced to discover that these unique and interesting creatures, one of the special objects of my journey South, were not only common, but to an extraordinary degree approachable. Their extreme confidence in man is one of their oddest characteristics. I heard from more than one person how easily and "in almost no time" they could be tamed, if indeed they needed taming. A resident of Hawks Park told me that they used to come into his house and stand upon the corners of the dinner table waiting for their share of the meal. When he was hoeing in the garden, they would perch on his hat, and stay there by the hour, unless he drove them off. He never did anything to tame them except to treat them kindly. When a brood was old enough to leave the nest, the parents

brought the youngsters up to the doorstep as a matter of course.

The Florida jay, a bird of the scrub, is not to be confounded with the Florida *blue* jay (a smaller and less conspicuously crested duplicate of our common Northern bird), to which it bears little resemblance either in personal appearance or in voice. Seen from behind, its aspect is peculiarly striking; the head, wings, rump, and tail being dark blue, with an almost rectangular patch of gray set in the midst. Its beak is very stout, and its tail very long; and though it would attract attention anywhere, it is hardly to be called handsome or graceful. Its notes — such of them as I heard, that is — are mostly guttural, with little or nothing of the screaming quality which distinguishes the blue jay's voice. To my ear they were often suggestive of the Northern shrike.

On the 23d of February I was standing on the rear piazza of one of the cottages, when a jay flew into the oak and palmetto scrub close by. A second glance, and I saw that she was busy upon a nest. When she had gone, I moved nearer, and waited. She did not return, and I descended the steps

and went to the edge of the thicket to inspect her work: a bulky affair, — nearly done, I thought, — loosely constructed of pretty large twigs. I had barely returned to the veranda before the bird appeared again. This time I was in a position to look squarely in upon her. She had some difficulty in edging her way through the dense bushes with a long, branching stick in her bill; but she accomplished the feat, fitted the new material into its place, readjusted the other twigs a bit here and there, and then, as she rose to depart, she looked me suddenly in the face and stopped, as much as to say, "Well, well! here's a pretty go! A man spying upon me!" I wondered whether she would throw up the work, but in another minute she was back again with another twig. The nest, I should have said, was about four feet from the ground, and perhaps twenty feet from the cottage. Four days later, I found her sitting upon it. She flew off as I came up, and I pushed into the scrub far enough to thrust my hand into the nest, which, to my disappointment, was empty. In fact, it was still far from completed; for on the 3d of

March, when I paid it a farewell visit, its owner was still at work lining it with fine grass. At that time it was a comfortable-looking and really elaborate structure. Both the birds came to look at me as I stood on the piazza. They perched together on the top of a stake so narrow that there was scarcely room for their feet; and as they stood thus, side by side, one of them struck its beak several times against the beak of the other, as if in play. I wished them joy of their expected progeny, and was the more ready to believe they would have it for this little display of sportive sentimentality.

It was a distinguished company that frequented that row of narrow back yards on the edge of the sand-hills. As a new-comer, I found the jays (sometimes there were ten under my eye at once) the most entertaining members of it, but if I had been a dweller there for the summer, I should perhaps have altered my opinion; for the group contained four of the finest of Floridian songsters, — the mocking-bird, the brown thrasher, the cardinal grosbeak, and the Carolina wren. Rare morning and evening concerts those cottagers must have. And

besides these there were catbirds, ground doves, red-eyed chewinks, white-eyed chewinks, a song sparrow (one of the few that I saw in Florida), savanna sparrows, myrtle birds, redpoll warblers, a phœbe, and two flickers. The last-named birds, by the way, are never backward about displaying their tender feelings. A treetop flirtation is their special delight (I hope my readers have all seen one; few things of the sort are better worth looking at), and here, in the absence of trees, they had taken to the ridgepole of a house.

More than once I remarked white-breasted swallows straggling northward along the line of sand-hills. They were in loose order, but the movement was plainly concerted, with all the look of a vernal migration. This swallow, the first of its family to arrive in New England, remains in Florida throughout the winter, but is known also to go as far south as Central America. The purple martins — which, so far as I am aware, do not winter in Florida — had already begun to make their appearance. While crossing the bridge, February 22, I was surprised to notice two of them sitting upon a bird-box

over the draw, which just then stood open for the passage of a tug-boat. The toll-gatherer told me they had come "from some place" eight or ten days before. His attention had been called to them by his cat, who was trying to get up to the box to bid them welcome. He believed that she discovered them within three minutes of their arrival. It seemed not unlikely. In its own way a cat is a pretty sharp ornithologist.

One or two cormorants were almost always about the river. Sometimes they sat upon stakes in a patriotic, spread-eagle (American eagle) attitude, as if drying their wings, — a curious sight till one became accustomed to it. Snakebirds and buzzards resort to the same device, but I cannot recall ever seeing any Northern bird thus engaged. From the south bridge I one morning saw, to my great satisfaction, a couple of white pelicans, the only ones that I found in Florida, though I was assured that within twenty years they had been common along the Halifax and Hillsborough rivers. My birds were flying up the river at a good height. The brown pelicans, on the other hand, made their daily pilgrimages

just above the level of the water, as has been already described, and were never over the river, but off the beach.

All in all, there are few pleasanter walks in Florida, I believe, than the beach-round at Daytona, out by one bridge and back by the other. An old hotel-keeper — a rural Yankee, if one could tell anything by his look and speech — said to me in a burst of confidence, "Yes, we 've got a climate, and that 's about all we have got, — climate and sand." I could not entirely agree with him. For myself, I found not only fine days, but fine prospects. But there was no denying the sand.

ALONG THE HILLSBOROUGH.

WHEREVER a walker lives, he finds sooner or later one favorite road. So it was with me at New Smyrna, where I lived for three weeks. I had gone there for the sake of the river, and my first impulse was to take the road that runs southerly along its bank. At the time I thought it the most beautiful road I had found in Florida, nor have I seen any great cause since to alter that opinion. With many pleasant windings (beautiful roads are never straight, nor unnecessarily wide, which is perhaps the reason why our rural authorities devote themselves so madly to the work of straightening and widening), — with many pleasant windings, I say,

"The grace of God made manifest in curves,"

it follows the edge of the hammock, having the river on one side, and the forest on the other. It was afternoon when I first saw it. Then it is shaded from the sun, while the river and its opposite bank have on them a

light more beautiful than can be described or imagined; a light — with reverence for the poet of nature be it spoken — a light that never was *except* on sea or land. The poet's dream was never equal to it.

In a flat country stretches of water are doubly welcome. They take the place of hills, and give the eye what it craves, — distance; which softens angles, conceals details, and heightens colors, — in short, transfigures the world with its romancer's touch, and blesses us with illusion. So, as I loitered along the south road, I never tired of looking across the river to the long, wooded island, and over that to the line of sand-hills that marked the eastern rim of the East Peninsula, beyond which was the Atlantic. The white crests of the hills made the sharper points of the horizon line. Elsewhere clumps of nearer pine-trees intervened, while here and there a tall palmetto stood, or seemed to stand, on the highest and farthest ridge looking seaward. But particulars mattered little. The blue water, the pale, changeable grayish-green of the low island woods, the deeper green of the pines, the unnamable hues of the sky, the sun-

shine that flooded it all, these were beauty enough; — beauty all the more keenly enjoyed because for much of the way it was seen only by glimpses, through vistas of palmetto and live-oak. Sometimes the road came quite out of the woods, as it rounded a turn of the hammock. Then I stopped to gaze long at the scene. Elsewhere I pushed through the hedge at favorable points, and sat, or stood, looking up and down the river. A favorite seat was the prow of an old row-boat, which lay, falling to pieces, high and dry upon the sand. It had made its last cruise, but I found it still useful.

The river is shallow. At low tide sand-bars and oyster-beds occupy much of its breadth; and even when it looked full, a great blue heron would very likely be wading in the middle of it. That was a sight to which I had grown accustomed in Florida, where this bird, familiarly known as "the major," is apparently ubiquitous. Too big to be easily hidden, it is also, as a general thing, too wary to be approached within gunshot. I am not sure that I ever came within sight of one, no matter how suddenly or how far away, that it did not give evi-

dence of having seen me first. Long legs, long wings, a long bill — and long sight and long patience: such is the tall bird's dowry. Good and useful qualities, all of them. Long may they avail to put off the day of their owner's extermination.

The major is scarcely a bird of which you can make a pet in your mind, as you may of the chickadee, for instance, or the bluebird, or the hermit thrush. He does not lend himself naturally to such imaginary endearments. But it is pleasant to have him on one's daily beat. I should count it one compensation for having to live in Florida instead of in Massachusetts (but I might require a good many others) that I should see him a hundred times as often. In walking down the river road I seldom saw less than half a dozen; not together (the major, like fishermen in general, is of an unsocial turn), but here one and there one, — on a sand-bar far out in the river, or in some shallow bay, or on the submerged edge of an oyster-flat. Wherever he was, he always looked as if he might be going to do something presently; even now, perhaps, the matter was on his mind; but at this mo-

ment — well, there are times when a heron's strength is to stand still. Certainly he seemed in no danger of overeating. A cracker told me that the major made an excellent dish if killed on the full of the moon. I wondered at that qualification, but my informant explained himself. The bird, he said, feeds mostly at night, and fares best with the moon to help him. If the reader would dine off roast blue heron, therefore, as I hope I never shall, let him mind the lunar phases. But think of the gastronomic ups and downs of a bird that is fat and lean by turns twelve times a year! Possibly my informant overstated the case; but in any event I would trust the major to bear himself like a philosopher. If there is any one of God's creatures that can wait for what he wants, it must be the great blue heron.

I have spoken of his caution. If he was patrolling a shallow on one side of an oyster-bar, — at the rate, let us say, of two steps a minute, — and took it into his head (an inappropriate phrase, as conveying an idea of something like suddenness) to try the water on the other side, he did not

spread his wings, as a matter of course, and fly over. First he put up his head — an operation that makes another bird of him — and looked in all directions. How could he tell what enemy might be lying in wait? And having alighted on the other side (his manner of alighting is one of his prettiest characteristics), he did not at once draw in his neck till his bill protruded on a level with his body, and resume his labors, but first he looked once more all about him. It was a good *habit* to do that, anyhow, and he meant to run no risks. If "the race of birds was created out of innocent, light-minded men, whose thoughts were directed toward heaven," according to the word of Plato, then *Ardea herodias* must long ago have fallen from grace. I imagine his state of mind to be always like that of our pilgrim fathers in times of Indian massacres. When they went after the cows or to hoe the corn, they took their guns with them, and turned no corner without a sharp lookout against ambush. No doubt such a condition of affairs has this advantage, that it makes ennui impossible. There is always something to live for, if it be only to avoid getting killed.

After this manner did the Hillsborough River majors all behave themselves until my very last walk beside it. Then I found the exception, — the exception that is as good as inevitable in the case of any bird, if the observation be carried far enough. He (or she; there was no telling which it was) stood on the sandy beach, a splendid creature in full nuptial garb, two black plumes nodding jauntily from its crown, and masses of soft elongated feathers draping its back and lower neck. Nearer and nearer I approached, till I must have been within a hundred feet; but it stood as if on dress parade, exulting to be looked at. Let us hope it never carried itself thus gayly when the wrong man came along.

Near the major — not keeping him company, but feeding in the same shallows and along the same oyster-bars — were constantly to be seen two smaller relatives of his, the little blue heron and the Louisiana. The former is what is called a dichromatic species; some of the birds are blue, and others white. On the Hillsborough, it seemed to me that white specimens predominated; but possibly that was because

they were so much more conspicuous. Sunlight favors the white feather ; no other color shows so quickly or so far. If you are on the beach and catch sight of a bird far out at sea, — a gull or a tern, a gannet or a loon, — it is invariably the white parts that are seen first. And so the little white heron might stand never so closely against the grass or the bushes on the further shore of the river, and the eye could not miss him. If he had been a blue one, at that distance, ten to one he would have escaped me. Besides, I was more on the alert for white ones, because I was always hoping to find one of them with black legs. In other words, I was looking for the little white egret, a bird concerning which, thanks to the murderous work of plume-hunters, — thanks, also, to those good women who pay for having the work done, — I must confess that I went to Florida and came home again without certainly seeing it.

The heron with which I found myself especially taken was the Louisiana ; a bird of about the same size as the little blue, but with an air of daintiness and lightness that is quite its own, and quite indescribable.

When it rose upon the wing, indeed, it seemed almost *too* light, almost unsteady, as if it lacked ballast, like a butterfly. It was the most numerous bird of its tribe along the river, I think, and, with one exception, the most approachable. That exception was the green heron, which frequented the flats along the village front, and might well have been mistaken for a domesticated bird; letting you walk across a plank directly over its head while it squatted upon the mud, and when disturbed flying into a fig-tree before the hotel piazza, just as the dear little ground doves were in the habit of doing. To me, who had hitherto seen the green heron in the wildest of places, this tameness was an astonishing sight. It would be hard to say which surprised me more, the New Smyrna green herons or the St. Augustine sparrow-hawks, — which latter treated me very much as I am accustomed to being treated by village-bred robins in Massachusetts.

The Louisiana heron was my favorite, as I say, but incomparably the handsomest member of the family (I speak of such as I saw) was the great white egret. In truth, the epithet "handsome" seems almost a

vulgarism as applied to a creature so superb, so utterly and transcendently splendid. I saw it — in a way to be sure of it — only once. Then, on an island in the Hillsborough, two birds stood in the dead tops of low shrubby trees, fully exposed in the most favorable of lights, their long dorsal trains drooping behind them and swaying gently in the wind. I had never seen anything so magnificent. And when I returned, two or three hours afterward, from a jaunt up the beach to Mosquito Inlet, there they still were, as if they had not stirred in all that time. The reader should understand that this egret is between four and five feet in length, and measures nearly five feet from wing tip to wing tip, and that its plumage throughout is of spotless white. It is pitiful to think how constantly a bird of that size and color must be in danger of its life.

Happily, the lawmakers of the State have done something of recent years for the protection of such defenseless beauties. Happily, too, shooting from the river boats is no longer permitted, — on the regular lines, that is. I myself saw a young gentleman stand on the deck of an excursion steamer,

with a rifle, and do his worst to kill or maim every living thing that came in sight, from a spotted sandpiper to a turkey buzzard! I call him a "gentleman;" he was in gentle company, and the fact that he chewed gum industriously would, I fear, hardly invalidate his claim to that title. The narrow river wound in and out between low, densely wooded banks, and the beauty of the shifting scene was enough almost to take one's breath away; but the crack of the rifle was not the less frequent on that account. Perhaps the sportsman was a Southerner, to whom river scenery of that enchanting kind was an old story. More likely he was a Northerner, one of the men who thank Heaven they are "not sentimental."

In my rambles up and down the river road I saw few water birds beside the herons. Two or three solitary cormorants would be shooting back and forth at a furious rate, or swimming in midstream; and sometimes a few spotted sandpipers and killdeer plovers were feeding along the shore. Once in a great while a single gull or tern made its appearance, — just often enough to keep me wondering why they were not there

oftener, — and one day a water turkey went suddenly over my head and dropped into the river on the farther side of the island. I was glad to see this interesting creature for once in salt water; for the Hillsborough, like the Halifax and the Indian rivers, is a river in name only, — a river by brevet, — being, in fact, a salt-water lagoon or sound between the mainland and the eastern peninsula.

Fish-hawks were always in sight, and bald eagles were seldom absent altogether. Sometimes an eagle stood perched on a dead tree on an island. Oftener I heard a scream, and looked up to see one sailing far overhead, or chasing an osprey. On one such occasion, when the hawk seemed to be making a losing fight, a third bird suddenly intervened, and the eagle, as I thought, was driven away. "Good for the brotherhood of fish-hawks!" I exclaimed. But at that moment I put my glass on the new-comer; and behold, he was not a hawk, but another eagle. Meanwhile the hawk had disappeared with his fish, and I was left to ponder the mystery.

As for the wood, the edge of the ham-

mock, through which the road passes, there were no birds in it. It was one of those places (I fancy every bird-gazer must have had experience of such) where it is a waste of time to seek them. I could walk down the road for two miles and back again, and then sit in my room at the hotel for fifteen minutes, and see more wood birds, and more kinds of them, in one small live-oak before the window than I had seen in the whole four miles; and that not once and by accident, but again and again. In affairs of this kind it is useless to contend. The spot looks favorable, you say, and nobody can deny it; there must be birds there, plenty of them; your missing them to-day was a matter of chance; you will try again. And you try again — and again — and yet again. But in the end you have to acknowledge that, for some reason unknown to you, the birds have agreed to give that place the go-by.

One bird, it is true, I found in this hammock, and not elsewhere: a single oven-bird, which, with one Northern water thrush and one Louisiana water thrush, completed my set of Florida *Seiuri*. Besides him I recall one hermit thrush, a few cedar-birds, a

house wren, chattering at a great rate among the "bootjacks" (leaf-stalks) of an overturned palmetto-tree, with an occasional mocking-bird, cardinal grosbeak, prairie warbler, yellow redpoll, myrtle bird, ruby-crowned kinglet, phœbe, and flicker. In short, there were no birds at all, except now and then an accidental straggler of a kind that could be found almost anywhere else in indefinite numbers.

And as it was not the presence of birds that made the river road attractive, so neither was it any unwonted display of blossoms. Beside a similar road along the bank of the Halifax, in Daytona, grew multitudes of violets, and goodly patches of purple verbena (garden plants gone wild, perhaps), and a fine profusion of spiderwort, — a pretty flower, the bluest of the blue, thrice welcome to me as having been one of the treasures of the very first garden of which I have any remembrance. "Indigo plant," we called it then. Here, however, on the way from New Smyrna to Hawks Park, I recall no violets, nor any verbena or spiderwort. Yellow wood-sorrel (oxalis) was here, of course, as it was everywhere.

It dotted the grass in Florida very much as five-fingers do in Massachusetts, I sometimes thought. And the creeping, round-leaved houstonia was here, with a superfluity of a weedy blue sage (*Salvia lyrata*). Here, also, as in Daytona, I found a strikingly handsome tufted plant, a highly varnished evergreen, which I persisted in taking for a fern — the sterile fronds — in spite of repeated failures to find it described by Dr. Chapman under that head, until at last an excellent woman came to my help with the information that it was "coontie" (*Zamia integrifolia*), famous as a plant out of which the Southern people made bread in war time. This confession of botanical amateurishness and incompetency will be taken, I hope, as rather to my credit than otherwise; but it would be morally worthless if I did not add the story of another plant, which, in this same New Smyrna hammock, I frequently noticed hanging in loose bunches, like blades of flaccid deep green grass, from the trunks of cabbage palmettos. The tufts were always out of reach, and I gave them no particular thought; and it was not until I got home

to Massachusetts, and then almost by accident, that I learned what they were. They, it turned out, *were* ferns (*Vittaria lineata* — grass fern), and my discomfiture was complete.

This comparative dearth of birds and flowers was not in all respects a disadvantage. On the contrary, to a naturalist blessed now and then with a supernaturalistic mood, it made the place, on occasion, a welcome retreat. Thus, one afternoon, as I remember, I had been reading Keats, the only book I had brought with me, — not counting manuals, of course, which come under another head, — and by and by started once more for the pine lands by the way of the cotton-shed hammock, "to see what I could see." But poetry had spoiled me just then for anything like scientific research, and as I waded through the ankle-deep sand I said to myself all at once, "No, no! What do I care for another new bird? I want to see the beauty of the world." With that I faced about, and, taking a side track, made as directly as possible for the river road. There I should have a mind at ease, with no unfamiliar, tantalizing bird note to set my

curiosity on edge, nor any sand through which to be picking my steps.

The river road is paved with oyster-shells. If any reader thinks that statement prosaic or unimportant, then he has never lived in southern Florida. In that part of the world all new-comers have to take walking-lessons; unless, indeed, they have already served an apprenticeship on Cape Cod, or in some other place equally arenarious. My own lesson I got at second hand, and on a Sunday. It was at New Smyrna, in the village. Two women were behind me, on their way home from church, and one of them was complaining of the sand, to which she was not yet used. "Yes," said the other, "I found it pretty hard walking at first, but I learned after a while that the best way is to set the heel down hard, as hard as you can; then the sand does n't give under you so much, and you get along more comfortably." I wonder whether she noticed, just in front of her, a man who began forthwith to bury his boot heel at every step?

In such a country (the soil is said to be good for orange-trees, but they do not have to walk) roads of powdered shell are veri-

table luxuries, and land agents are quite right in laying all stress upon them as inducements to possible settlers. If the author of the Apocalypse had been raised in Florida, we should never have had the streets of the New Jerusalem paved with gold. His idea of heaven would have been different from that; more personal and home-felt, we may be certain.

The river road, then, as I have said, and am glad to say again, was shell-paved. And well it might be; for the hammock, along the edge of which it meandered, seemed, in some places at least, to be little more than a pile of oyster-shells, on which soil had somehow been deposited, and over which a forest was growing. Florida Indians have left an evil memory. I heard a philanthropic visitor lamenting that she had talked with many of the people about them, and had yet to hear a single word said in their favor. Somebody might have been good enough to say that, with all their faults, they had given to eastern Florida a few hills, such as they are, and at present are supplying it, indirectly, with comfortable highways. How they must have feasted, to leave such heaps of shells

behind them! They came to the coast on purpose, we may suppose. Well, the red-men are gone, but the oyster-beds remain; and if winter refugees continue to pour in this direction, as doubtless they will, they too will eat a "heap" of oysters (it is easy to see how the vulgar Southern use of that word may have originated), and in the course of time, probably, the shores of the Halifax and the Hillsborough will be a fine mountainous country! And then, if this ancient, nineteenth-century prediction is remembered, the highest peak of the range will perhaps be named in a way which the innate modesty of the prophet restrains him from specifying with greater particularity.

Meanwhile it is long to wait, and tourists and residents alike must find what comfort they can in the lesser hills which, thanks to the good appetite of their predecessors, are already theirs. For my own part, there is one such eminence of which I cherish the most grateful recollections. It stands (or stood; the road-makers had begun carting it away) at a bend in the road just south of one of the Turnbull canals. I climbed it often (it can hardly be less than fifteen or

twenty feet above the level of the sea), and spent more than one pleasant hour upon its grassy summit. Northward was New Smyrna, a village in the woods, and farther away towered the lighthouse of Mosquito Inlet. Along the eastern sky stretched the long line of the peninsula sand-hills, between the white crests of which could be seen the rude cottages of Coronado beach. To the south and west was the forest, and in front, at my feet, lay the river with its woody islands. Many times have I climbed a mountain and felt myself abundantly repaid by an off-look less beautiful. This was the spot to which I turned when I had been reading Keats, and wanted to see the beauty of the world. Here were a grassy seat, the shadow of orange-trees, and a wide prospect. In Florida, I found no better place in which a man who wished to be both a naturalist and a nature-lover, who felt himself heir to a double inheritance,

"The clear eye's moiety and the dear heart's part,"

could for the time sit still and be happy.

The orange-trees yielded other things beside shadow, though perhaps nothing better

than that. They were resplendent with fruit, and on my earlier visits were also in bloom. One did not need to climb the hill to learn the fact. For an out-of-door sweetness it would be hard, I think, to improve upon the scent of orange blossoms. As for the oranges themselves, they seemed to be in little demand, large and handsome as they were. Southern people in general, I fancy, look upon wild fruit of this kind as not exactly edible. I remember asking two colored men in Tallahassee whether the oranges still hanging conspicuously from a tree just over the wall (a sight not so very common in that part of the State) were sweet or sour. I have forgotten just what they said, but I remember how they *looked*. I meant the inquiry as a mild bit of humor, but to them it was a thousandfold better than that: it was wit ineffable. What Shakespeare said about the prosperity of a jest was never more strikingly exemplified. In New Smyrna, with orange groves on every hand, the wild fruit went begging with natives and tourists alike; so that I feel a little hesitancy about confessing my own relish for it, lest I should be accused of affectation. Not that I de-

voured wild oranges by the dozen, or in place of sweet ones; one sour orange goes a good way, as the common saying is; but I ate them, nevertheless, or rather drank them, and found them, in a thirsty hour, decidedly refreshing.

The unusual coldness of the past season (Florida winters, from what I heard about them, must have fallen of late into a queer habit of being regularly exceptional) had made it difficult to buy sweet oranges that were not dry and "punky" [1] toward the stem; but the hardier wild fruit had weathered the frost, and was so juicy that, as I say, you did not so much eat one as drink it. As for the taste, it was a wholesome bitter-sour, as if a lemon had been flavored with quinine; not quite so sour as a lemon, perhaps, nor *quite* so bitter as Peruvian bark, but, as it were, an agreeable compromise between the two. When I drank one, I not only quenched my thirst, but felt that I had taken an infallible prophylactic against the malarial fever. Better still, I had surprised myself. For one who had felt a lifelong

[1] I have heard this useful word all my life, and now am surprised to find it wanting in the dictionaries.

distaste, unsocial and almost unmanly, for the bitter drinks which humanity in general esteems so essential to its health and comfort, I was developing new and unexpected capabilities; than which few things can be more encouraging as years increase upon a man's head, and the world seems to be closing in about him.

Later in the season, on this same shell mound, I might have regaled myself with fresh figs. Here, at any rate, was a thrifty-looking fig-tree, though its crop, if it bore one, would perhaps not have waited my coming so patiently as the oranges had done. Here, too, was a red cedar; and to me, who, in my ignorance, had always thought of this tough little evergreen as especially at home on my own bleak and stony hillsides, it seemed an incongruous trio, — fig-tree, orange-tree, and savin. In truth, the cedars of Florida were one of my liveliest surprises. At first I refused to believe that they were red cedars, so strangely exuberant were they, so disdainful of the set, cone-shaped, toy-tree pattern on which I had been used to seeing red cedars built. And when at last a study of the flora compelled me to admit their

identity,[1] I turned about and protested that I had never seen red cedars before. One, in St. Augustine, near San Marco Avenue, I had the curiosity to measure. The girth of the trunk at the smallest place was six feet five inches, and the spread of the branches was not less than fifty feet.

The stroller in this road suffered few distractions. The houses, two or three to the mile, stood well back in the woods, with little or no cleared land about them. Picnic establishments they seemed to a Northern eye, rather than permanent dwellings. At one point in the hammock, a rude camp was occupied by a group of rough-looking men and several small children, who seemed to be getting on as best they could — none too well, to judge from appearances — without

[1] I speak as if I had accepted my own study of the manual as conclusive. I did for the time being, but while writing this paragraph I bethought myself that I might be in error, after all. I referred the question, therefore, to a friend, a botanist of authority. "No wonder the red cedars of Florida puzzled you," he replied. "No one would suppose at first that they were of the same species as our New England savins. The habit is entirely different; but botanists have found no characters by which to separate them, and you are safe in considering them as *Juniperus Virginiana*."

feminine ministrations. What they were there for I never made out. They fished, I think, but whether by way of amusement or as a serious occupation I did not learn. Perhaps, like the Indians of old, they had come to the river for the oyster season. They might have done worse. They never paid the slightest attention to me, nor once gave me any decent excuse for engaging them in talk. The best thing I remember about them was a tableau caught in passing. A "norther" had descended upon us unexpectedly (Florida is not a whit behind the rest of the world in sudden changes of temperature), and while hastening homeward, toward nightfall, hugging myself to keep warm, I saw, in the woods, this group of campers disposed about a lively blaze.

Let us be thankful, say I, that memory is so little the servant of the will. Chance impressions of this kind, unforeseen, involuntary, and inexplicable, make one of the chief delights of traveling, or rather of having traveled. In the present case, indeed, the permanence of the impression is perhaps not altogether beyond the reach of a plausible conjecture. We have not always lived

in houses; and if we love the sight of a fire out-of-doors, — a camp-fire, that is to say, — as we all do, so that the burning of a brush-heap in a neighbor's yard will draw us to the window, the feeling is but part of an ancestral inheritance. We have come by it honestly, as the phrase is. And so I need not scruple to set down another reminiscence of the same kind, — an early morning street scene, of no importance in itself, in the village of New Smyrna. It may have been on the morning next after the "norther" just mentioned. I cannot say. We had two or three such touches of winter in early March; none of them at all distressing, be it understood, to persons in ordinary health. One night water froze, — "as thick as a silver dollar," — and orange growers were alarmed for the next season's crop, the trees being just ready to blossom. Some men kept fires burning in their orchards overnight; a pretty spectacle, I should think, especially where the fruit was still ungathered. On one of these frosty mornings, then, I saw a solitary horseman, not "wending his way," but warming his hands over a fire that he had built for that purpose in

the village street. One might live and die in a New England village without seeing such a sight. A Yankee would have betaken himself to the corner grocery. But here, though that "adjunct of civilization" was directly across the way, most likely it had never had a stove in it. The sun would give warmth enough in an hour, — by nine o'clock one would probably be glad of a sunshade; but the man was chilly after his ride; it was still a bit early to go about the business that had brought him into town: what more natural than to hitch his horse, get together a few sticks, and kindle a blaze? What an insane idea it would have seemed to him that a passing stranger might remember him and his fire three months afterward, and think them worth talking about in print! But then, as was long ago said, it is the fate of some men to have greatness thrust upon them.

This main street of the village, by the way, with its hotels and shops, was no other than my river road itself, in its more civilized estate, as I now remember with a sense of surprise. In my mind the two had never any connection. It was in this thorough-

fare that one saw now and then a group of cavaliers strolling about under broad-brimmed hats, with big spurs at their heels, accosting passers-by with hearty familiarity, first names and hand-shakes, while their horses stood hitched to the branches of road-side trees, — a typical Southern picture. Here, on a Sunday afternoon, were two young fellows who had brought to town a mother coon and three young ones, hoping to find a purchaser. The guests at the hotels manifested no eagerness for such pets, but the colored bell-boys and waiters gathered about, and after a little good-humored dickering bought the entire lot, box and all, for a dollar and a half; first having pulled the little ones out between the slats — not without some risk to both parties — to look at them and pass them round. The venders walked off with grins of ill-concealed triumph. The Fates had been kind to them, and they had three silver half-dollars in their pockets. I heard one of them say something about giving part of the money to a third man who had told them where the nest was; but his companion would listen to no such folly. "He would n't come with us," he

said, "and we won't tell him a damned thing." I fear there was nothing distinctively Southern about *that.*

Here, too, in the heart of the town, was a magnificent cluster of live-oaks, worth coming to Florida to see; far-spreading, full of ferns and air plants, and heavy with hanging moss. Day after day I went out to admire them. Under them was a neglected orange grove, and in one of the orange-trees, amid the glossy foliage, appeared my first summer tanager. It was a royal setting, and the splendid vermilion-red bird was worthy of it. Among the oaks I walked in the evening, listening to the strange low chant of the chuck-will's-widow, — a name which the owner himself pronounces with a rest after the first syllable. Once, for two or three days, the trees were amazingly full of blue yellow-backed warblers. Numbers of them, a dozen at least, could be heard singing at once directly over one's head, running up the scale not one after another, but literally in unison. Here the tufted titmouse, the very soul of monotony, piped and piped and piped, as if his diapason stop were

pulled out and stuck, and could not be pushed in again. He is an odd genius. With plenty of notes, he wearies you almost to distraction, harping on one string for half an hour together. He is the one Southern bird that I should perhaps be sorry to see common in Massachusetts; but that "perhaps" is a large word. Many yellow-throated warblers, silent as yet, were commonly in the live-oaks, and innumerable myrtle birds, also silent, with prairie warblers, black-and-white creepers, solitary vireos, an occasional chickadee, and many more. It was a birdy spot; and just across the way, on the shrubby island, were red-winged blackbirds, who piqued my curiosity by adding to the familiar *conkaree* a final syllable, — the Florida termination, I called it, — which made me wonder whether, as has been the case with so many other Florida birds, they might not turn out to be a distinct race, worthy of a name (*Agelaius phœniceus something-or-other*), as well as of a local habitation. I suggest the question to those whose business it is to be learned in such matters.[1]

[1] My suggestion, I now discover, — since this paper was

The tall grass about the borders of the island was alive with clapper rails. Before I rose in the morning I heard them crying in full chorus; and now and then during the day something would happen, and all at once they would break out with one sharp volley, and then instantly all would be silent again. Theirs is an apt name, — *Rallus crepitans*. Once I watched two of them in the act of crepitating, and ever after that, when the sudden uproar burst forth, I seemed to see the reeds full of birds, each with his bill pointing skyward, bearing his part in the salvo. So far as I could perceive, they had nothing to fear from human enemies. They ran about the mud on the edge of the grass, especially in the morning, looking like half-grown pullets. Their specialty was crab-fishing, at which they were highly expert, plunging into the water up to the depth of their

first printed, — was some years too late. Mr. Ridgway, in his *Manual of North American Birds* (1887), had already described a subspecies of Florida redwings under the name of *Agelaius phœniceus bryanti*. Whether my New Smyrna birds should come under that title cannot be told, of course, in the absence of specimens; but on the strength of the song I venture to think it highly probable.

legs, and handling and swallowing pretty large specimens with surprising dexterity. I was greatly pleased with them, as well as with their local name, "everybody's chickens."

Once I feared we had heard the last of them. On a day following a sudden fall of the mercury, a gale from the north set in at noon, with thunder and lightning, hail, and torrents of rain. The river was quickly lashed into foam, and the gale drove the ocean into it through the inlet, till the shrubbery of the rails' island barely showed above the breakers. The street was deep under water, and fears were entertained for the new bridge and the road to the beach. All night the gale continued, and all the next day till late in the afternoon; and when the river should have been at low tide, the island was still flooded. Gravitation was overmatched for the time being. And where were the rails, I asked myself. They could swim, no doubt, when put to it, but it seemed impossible that they could survive so fierce an inundation. Well, the wind ceased, the tide went out at last; and behold, the rails were in full

cry, not a voice missing! How they had managed it was beyond my ken.

Another island, farther out than that of the rails (but the rails, like the long-billed marsh wrens, appeared to be present in force all up and down the river, in suitable places), was occupied nightly as a crow-roost. Judged by the morning clamor, which, like that of the rails, I heard from my bed, its population must have been enormous. One evening I happened to come up the street just in time to see the hinder part of the procession — some hundreds of birds — flying across the river. They came from the direction of the pine lands in larger and smaller squads, and with but a moderate amount of noise moved straight to their destination. All but one of them so moved, that is to say. The performance of that one exception was a mystery. He rose high in the air, over the river, and remained soaring all by himself, acting sometimes as if he were catching insects, till the flight had passed, even to the last scattering detachments. What could be the meaning of his eccentric behavior? Some momentary caprice had taken him,

perhaps. Or was he, as I could not help asking, some duly appointed officer of the day, — grand marshal, if you please, — with a commission to see all hands in before retiring himself? He waited, at any rate, till the final stragglers had passed; then he came down out of the air and followed them. I meant to watch the ingathering a second time, to see whether this feature of it would be repeated, but I was never there at the right moment. One cannot do everything.

Now, alas, Florida seems very far off. I am never likely to walk again under those New Smyrna live-oaks, nor to see again all that beauty of the Hillsborough. And yet, in a truer and better sense of the word, I do see it, and shall. What a heavenly light falls at this moment on the river and the island woods! Perhaps we must come back to Wordsworth, after all, —

"The light that never was, on sea or land."

A MORNING AT THE OLD SUGAR MILL.[1]

On the third or fourth day of my sojourn at the Live Oak Inn, the lady of the house, noticing my peripatetic habits, I suppose, asked whether I had been to the old sugar mill. The ruin is mentioned in the guide-books as one of the historic features of the

[1] I have called the ruin here spoken of a "sugar mill" for no better reason than because that is the name commonly applied to it by the residents of the town. When this sketch was written, I had never heard of a theory since broached in some of our Northern newspapers, — I know not by whom, — that the edifice in question was built as a chapel, perhaps by Columbus himself! I should be glad to believe it, and can only add my hope that he will be shown to have built also the so-called sugar mill a few miles north of New Smyrna, in the Dunlawton hammock behind Port Orange. In that, to be sure, there is still much old machinery, but perhaps its presence would prove no insuperable objection to a theory so pleasing. In matters of this kind, much depends upon subjective considerations; in one sense, at least, "all things are possible to him that believeth." For my own part, I profess no opinion. I am neither an archæologist nor an ecclesiastic, and speak simply as a chance observer.

ancient settlement of New Smyrna, but I had forgotten the fact, and was thankful to receive a description of the place, as well as of the road thither, — a rather blind road, my informant said, with no houses at which to inquire the way.

Two or three mornings afterward, I set out in the direction indicated. If the route proved to be half as vague as my good lady's account of it had sounded, I should probably never find the mill; but the walk would be pleasant, and that, after all, was the principal consideration, especially to a man who just then cared more, or thought he did, for a new bird or a new song than for an indefinite number of eighteenth-century relics.

For the first half-mile the road follows one of the old Turnbull canals dug through the coquina stone which underlies the soil hereabout; then, after crossing the railway, it strikes to the left through a piece of truly magnificent wood, known as the cotton-shed hammock, because, during the war, cotton was stored here in readiness for the blockade runners of Mosquito Inlet. Better than anything I had yet seen, this wood answered to my idea of a semi-tropical forest: live-

oaks, magnolias, palmettos, sweet gums, maples, and hickories, with here and there a long-leaved pine overtopping all the rest. The palmettos, most distinctively Southern of them all, had been badly used by their hardier neighbors ; they looked stunted, and almost without exception had been forced out of their normal perpendicular attitude. The live-oaks, on the other hand, were noble specimens ; lofty and wide-spreading, elm-like in habit, it seemed to me, though not without the sturdiness which belongs as by right to all oaks, and seldom or never to the American elm.

What gave its peculiar tropical character to the wood, however, was not so much the trees as the profusion of plants that covered them and depended from them : air-plants (*Tillandsia*), large and small, — like pine-apples, with which they claim a family relationship, — the exuberant hanging moss, itself another air-plant, ferns, and vines. The ferns, a species of polypody ("resurrection ferns," I heard them called), completely covered the upper surface of many of the larger branches, while the huge vines twisted about the trunks, or, quite as often,

dropped straight from the treetops to the ground.

In the very heart of this dense, dark forest (a forest primeval, I should have said, but I was assured that the ground had been under cultivation so recently that, to a practiced eye, the cotton-rows were still visible) stood a grove of wild orange-trees, the handsome fruit glowing like lamps amid the deep green foliage. There was little other brightness. Here and there in the undergrowth were yellow jessamine vines, but already — March 11 — they were past flowering. Almost or quite the only blossom just now in sight was the faithful round-leaved houstonia, growing in small flat patches in the sand on the edge of the road, with budding partridge-berry — a Yankee in Florida — to keep it company. Warblers and titmice twittered in the leafy treetops, and butterflies of several kinds, notably one gorgeous creature in yellow and black, like a larger and more resplendent Turnus, went fluttering through the underwoods. I could have believed myself in the heart of a limitless forest; but Florida hammocks, so far as I have seen, are seldom of great extent, and

the road presently crossed another railway track, and then, in a few rods more, came out into the sunny pine-woods, as one might emerge from a cathedral into the open day. Two men were approaching in a wagon (except on Sunday, I am not certain that I ever met a foot passenger in the flat-woods), and I improved the opportunity to make sure of my course. "Go about fifty yards," said one of them, "and turn to the right; then about fifty yards more, and turn to the left. *That* road will take you to the mill." Here was a man who had traveled in the pine lands, — where, of all places, it is easy to get lost and hard to find yourself, — and not only appreciated the value of explicit instructions, but, being a Southerner, had leisure enough and politeness enough to give them. I thanked him, and sauntered on. The day was before me, and the place was lively with birds. Pine-wood sparrows, pine warblers, and red-winged blackbirds were in song; two red-shouldered hawks were screaming, a flicker was shouting, a red-bellied woodpecker cried *kur-r-r-r*, brown-headed nuthatches were gossiping in the distance, and suddenly I heard, what I never

thought to hear in a pinery, the croak of a green heron. I turned quickly and saw him. It was indeed he. What a friend is ignorance, mother of all those happy surprises which brighten existence as they pass, like the butterflies of the wood. The heron was at home, and I was the stranger. For there was water near, as there is everywhere in Florida; and subsequently, in this very place, I met not only the green heron, but three of his relatives, — the great blue, the little blue, and the dainty Louisiana, more poetically known (and worthy to wear the name) as the "Lady of the Waters."

On this first occasion, however, the green heron was speedily forgotten; for just then I heard another note, unlike anything I had ever heard before, — as if a great Northern shrike had been struck with preternatural hoarseness, and, like so many other victims of the Northern winter, had betaken himself to a sunnier clime. I looked up. In the leafy top of a pine sat a boat-tailed grackle, splendidly iridescent, engaged in a musical performance which afterward became almost too familiar to me, but which now, as a novelty, was as interesting as it was gro-

tesque. This, as well as I can describe it, is what the bird was doing. He opened his bill, — *set* it, as it were, wide apart, — and holding it thus, emitted four or five rather long and very loud grating, shrikish notes; then instantly shook his wings with an extraordinary flapping noise, and followed that with several highly curious and startling cries, the concluding one of which sometimes suggested the cackle of a robin. All this he repeated again and again with the utmost fervor. He could not have been more enthusiastic if he had been making the sweetest music in the world. And I confess that I thought he had reason to be proud of his work. The introduction of wing-made sounds in the middle of a vocal performance was of itself a stroke of something like genius. It put me in mind of the firing of cannons as an accompaniment to the Anvil Chorus. Why should a creature of such gifts be named for his bodily dimensions, or the shape of his tail? Why not *Quiscalus gilmorius*, Gilmore's grackle?

That the sounds *were* wing-made I had no thought of questioning. I had seen the thing done, — seen it and heard it; and

what shall a man trust, if not his own eyes and ears, especially when each confirms the other? Two days afterward, nevertheless, I began to doubt. I heard a grackle "sing" in the manner just described, wing-beats and all, while flying from one tree to another; and later still, in a country where boat-tailed grackles were an every-day sight near the heart of the village, I more than once saw them produce the sounds in question without any perceptible movement of the wings, and furthermore, their mandibles could be seen moving in time with the beats. So hard is it to be sure of a thing, even when you see it and hear it.

"Oh yes," some sharp-witted reader will say, "you saw the wings flapping, — beating time, — and so you imagined that the sounds were like wing-beats." But for once the sharp-witted reader is in the wrong. The resemblance is not imaginary. Mr. F. M. Chapman, in A List of Birds Observed at Gainesville, Florida,[1] says of the boat-tailed grackle (*Quiscalus major*): "A singular note of this species greatly resembles the flapping of wings, as of a coot tripping

[1] *The Auk*, vol. v. p. 273.

over the water; this sound was very familiar to me, but so excellent is the imitation that for a long time I attributed it to one of the numerous coots which abound in most places favored by *Q. major*."

If the sounds are not produced by the wings, the question returns, of course, why the wings are shaken just at the right instant. To that I must respond with the time-honored formula, "Not prepared." The reader may believe, if he will, that the bird is aware of the imitative quality of the notes, and amuses itself by heightening the delusion of the looker-on. My own more commonplace conjecture is that the sounds are produced by snappings and gratings of the big mandibles ("He is gritting his teeth," said a shrewd unornithological Yankee, whose opinion I had solicited), and that the wing movements may be nothing but involuntary accompaniments of this almost convulsive action of the beak. But perhaps the sounds *are* wing-made, after all.

On the day of which I am writing, at any rate, I was troubled by no misgivings. I had seen something new, and was only desirous to see more of it. Who does not

love an original character? For at least half an hour the old mill was forgotten, while I chased the grackle about, as he flew hither and thither, sometimes with a logger-head shrike in furious pursuit. Once I had gone a few rods into the palmetto scrub, partly to be nearer the bird, but still more to enjoy the shadow of a pine, and was standing under the tree, motionless, when a man came along the road in a gig. "Surveying?" he asked, reining in his horse. "No, sir; I am looking at a bird in the tree yonder." I wished him to go on, and thought it best to gratify his curiosity at once. He was silent a moment; then he said, "Looking at the old sugar house from there?" That was too preposterous, and I answered with more voice, and perhaps with a touch of impatience, "No, no; I am trying to see a bird in that pine-tree." He was silent again. Then he gathered up the reins. "I 'm so deaf I can't hear you," he said, and drove on. "Good-by," I remarked, in a needless undertone; "you 're a good man, I 've no doubt, but deaf people should n't be inquisitive at long range."

The advice was sound enough, in itself

considered; properly understood, it might be held to contain, or at least to suggest, one of the profoundest, and at the same time one of the most practical, truths of all devout philosophy; but the testiness of its tone was little to my credit. He *was* a good man, — and the village doctor, — and more than once afterward put me under obligation. One of his best appreciated favors was unintended and indirect. I was driving with him through the hammock, and we passed a bit of swamp. "There are some pretty flowers," he exclaimed; "I think I must get them." At the word he jumped out of the gig, bade me do the same, hitched his horse, a half-broken stallion, to a sapling, and plunged into the thicket. I strolled elsewhere; and by and by he came back, a bunch of common blue iris in one hand, and his shoes and stockings in the other. "They are very pretty," he explained (he spoke of the flowers), "and it is early for them." After that I had no doubt of his goodness, and in case of need would certainly have called him rather than his younger rival at the opposite end of the village.

When I tired of chasing the grackle, or the shrike had driven him away (I do not remember now how the matter ended), I started again toward the old sugar mill. Presently a lone cabin came into sight. The grass-grown road led straight to it, and stopped at the gate. Two women and a brood of children stood in the door, and in answer to my inquiry one of the women (the children had already scampered out of sight) invited me to enter the yard. "Go round the house," she said, "and you will find a road that runs right down to the mill."

The mill, as it stands, is not much to look at: some fragments of wall built of coquina stone, with two or three arched windows and an arched door, the whole surrounded by a modern plantation of orange-trees, now almost as much a ruin as the mill itself. But the mill was built more than a hundred years ago, and serves well enough the principal use of abandoned and decaying things, — to touch the imagination. For myself, I am bound to say, it was a precious two hours that I passed beside it, seated on a crumbling stone in the shade of a dying orange-tree.

Behind me a redbird was whistling (cardinal grosbeak, I have been accustomed to call him, but I like the Southern name better, in spite of its ambiguity), now in eager, rapid tones, now slowly and with a dying fall. Now his voice fell almost to a whisper, now it rang out again; but always it was sweet and golden, and always the bird was out of sight in the shrubbery. The orange-trees were in bloom; the air was full of their fragrance, full also of the murmur of bees. All at once a deeper note struck in, and I turned to look. A humming-bird was hovering amid the white blossoms and glossy leaves. I saw his flaming throat, and the next instant he was gone, like a flash of light, — the first hummer of the year. I was far from home, and expectant of new things. That, I dare say, was the reason why I took the sound at first for the boom of a bumble-bee; some strange Floridian bee, with a deeper and more melodious bass than any Northern insect is master of.

It is good to be here, I say to myself, and we need no tabernacle. All things are in harmony. A crow in the distance says

caw, *caw* in a meditative voice, as if he, too, were thinking of days past; and not even the scream of a hen-hawk, off in the pine-woods, breaks the spell that is upon us. A quail whistles, — a true Yankee Bob White, to judge him by his voice, — and the white-eyed chewink (he is *not* a Yankee) whistles and sings by turns. The bluebird's warble and the pine warbler's trill could never be disturbing to the quietest mood. Only one voice seems out of tune: the white-eyed vireo, even to-day, cannot forget his saucy accent. But he soon falls silent. Perhaps, after all, he feels himself an intruder.

The morning is cloudless and warm, till suddenly, as if a door had been opened eastward, the sea breeze strikes me. Henceforth the temperature is perfect as I sit in the shadow. I think neither of heat nor of cold. I catch a glimpse of a beautiful leaf-green lizard on the gray trunk of an orange-tree, but it is gone (I wonder where) almost before I can say I saw it. Presently a brown one, with light-colored stripes and a bluish tail, is seen traveling over the crumbling wall, running into crannies and out again. Now it stops to look at me with its

jewel of an eye. And there, on the rustic arbor, is a third one, matching the unpainted wood in hue. Its throat is white, but when it is inflated, as happens every few seconds, it turns to the loveliest rose color. This inflated membrane should be a vocal sac, I think, but I hear no sound. Perhaps the chameleon's voice is too fine for dull human sense.

On two sides of me, beyond the orange-trees, is a thicket of small oaks and cabbage palmettos, — hammock, I suppose it is called. In all other directions are the pine-woods, with their undergrowth of saw palmetto. The cardinal sings from the hammock, and so does the Carolina wren. The chewinks, the blackbirds (a grackle just now flies over, and a fish-hawk, also), with the bluebirds and the pine warblers, are in the pinery. From the same place comes the song of a Maryland yellow-throat. There, too, the hen-hawks are screaming.

At my feet are blue violets and white houstonia. Vines, thinly covered with fresh leaves, straggle over the walls, — Virginia creeper, poison ivy, grapevine, and at least one other, the name of which I do not know.

A clump of tall blackberry vines is full of white blossoms, "bramble roses faint and pale," and in one corner is a tuft of scarlet blooms, — sage, perhaps, or something akin to it. For the moment I feel no curiosity. But withal the place is unkempt, as becomes a ruin. "Winter's ragged hand" has been rather heavy upon it. Withered palmetto leaves and leaf-stalks litter the ground, and of course, being in Florida, there is no lack of orange-peel lying about. Ever since I entered the State a new Scripture text has been running in my head: In the place where the orange-peel falleth, there shall it lie.

The mill, as I said, is now the centre of an orange grove. There must be hundreds of trees. All of them are small, but the greater part are already dead, and the rest are dying. Those nearest the walls are fullest of leaves, as if the walls somehow gave them protection. The forest is creeping into the inclosure. Here and there the graceful palm-like tassel of a young long-leaved pine rises above the tall winter-killed grass. It is not the worst thing about the world that it tends to run wild.

Now the quail sings again, this time in two notes, and now the hummer is again in the orange-tree. And all the while the red-bird whistles in the shrubbery. He feels the beauty of the day. If I were a bird, I would sing with him. From far away comes the chant of a pine-wood sparrow. I can just hear it.

This is a place for dreams and quietness. Nothing else seems worth the having. Let us feel no more the fever of life. Surely they are the wise who seek Nirvana; who insist not upon themselves, but wait absorption — reabsorption — into the infinite. The dead have the better part. I think of the stirring, adventurous man who built these walls and dug these canals. His life was full of action, full of journeyings and fightings. Now he is at peace, and his works do follow him — into the land of forgetfulness. Blessed are the dead. Blessed, too, are the bees, the birds, the butterflies, and the lizards. Next to the dead, perhaps, they are happy. And I also am happy, for I too am under the spell. To me also the sun and the air are sweet, and I too, for to-day at least, am careless of the world and all its doings.

So I sat dreaming, when suddenly there was a stir in the grass at my feet. A snake was coming straight toward me. Only the evening before a cracker had filled my ears with stories of "rattlers" and "moccasins." He seemed to have seen them everywhere, and to have killed them as one kills mosquitoes. I looked a second time at the moving thing in the grass. It was clothed in innocent black; but, being a son of Adam, I rose with involuntary politeness to let it pass. An instant more, and it slipped into the masonry at my side, and I sat down again. It had been out taking the sun, and had come back to its hole in the wall. How like the story of my own day, — of my whole winter vacation! Nay, if we choose to view it so, how like the story of human life itself!

As I started homeward, leaving the mill and the cabin behind me, some cattle were feeding in the grassy road. At sight of my umbrella (there are few places where a sunshade is more welcome than in a Florida pine-wood) they scampered away into the scrub. Poor, wild-eyed, hungry-looking things! I thought of Pharaoh's lean kine.

They were like the country itself, I was ready to say. But perhaps I misjudged both, seeing both, as I did, in the winter season. With the mercury at 80°, or thereabout, it is hard for the Northern tourist to remember that he is looking at a winter landscape. He compares a Florida winter with a New England summer, and can hardly find words to tell you how barren and poverty-stricken the country looks.

After this I went more than once to the sugar mill. Morning and afternoon I visited it, but somehow I could never renew the joy of my first visit. Moods are not to be had for the asking, nor earned by a walk. The place was still interesting, the birds were there, the sunshine was pleasant, and the sea breeze fanned me. The orange blossoms were still sweet, and the bees still hummed about them; but it was another day, or I was another man. In memory, none the less, all my visits blend in one, and the ruined mill in the dying orchard remains one of the bright spots in that strange Southern world which, almost from the moment I left it behind me, began to fade into indistinctness, like the landscape of a dream.

ON THE UPPER ST. JOHN'S.

The city of Sanford is a beautiful and interesting place, I hope, to those who live in it. To the Florida tourist it is important as lying at the head of steamboat navigation on the St. John's River, which here expands into a lake — Lake Monroe — some five miles in width, with Sanford on one side, and Enterprise on the other; or, as a waggish traveler once expressed it, with Enterprise on the north, and Sanford and enterprise on the south.

Walking naturalists and lovers of things natural have their own point of view, individual, unconventional, whimsical, if you please, — very different, at all events, from that of clearer-witted and more serious-minded men; and the inhabitants of Sanford will doubtless take it as a compliment, and be amused rather than annoyed, when I confess that I found their city a discouragement, a widespread desolation of houses and shops. If there is a pleasant country road

leading out of it in any direction, I was unlucky enough to miss it. My melancholy condition was hit off before my eyes in a parable, as it were, by a crowd of young fellows, black and white, whom I found one afternoon in a sand-lot just outside the city, engaged in what was intended for a game of baseball. They were doing their best, — certainly they made noise enough; but circumstances were against them. When the ball came to the ground, from no matter what height or with what impetus, it fell dead in the sand; if it had been made of solid rubber, it could not have rebounded. "Base-running" was little better than base-walking. "Sliding" was safe, but, by the same token, impossible. Worse yet, at every "foul strike" or "wild throw" the ball was lost, and the barefooted fielders had to pick their way painfully about in the outlying saw-palmetto scrub till they found it. I had never seen our "national game" played under conditions so untoward. None but true patriots would have the heart to try it, I thought, and I meditated writing to Washington, where the quadrennial purification of the civil service was just then in prog-

ress, — under a new broom, — to secure, if possible, a few bits of recognition ("plums" is the technical term, I believe) for men so deserving. The first baseman certainly, who had oftenest to wade into the scrub, should have received a consulate, at the very least. Yet they were a merry crew, those national gamesters. Their patriotism was of the noblest type, — the unconscious. They had no thought of being heroes, nor dreamed of bounties or pensions. They quarreled with the umpire, of course, but not with Fate; and I hope I profited by their example. My errand in Sanford was to see something of the river in its narrower and better part; and having done that, I did not regret what otherwise might have seemed a profitless week.

First, however, I walked about the city. Here, as already at St. Augustine, and afterward at Tallahassee, I found the mocking-birds in free song. They are birds of the town. And the same is true of the logger-head shrikes, a pair of which had built a nest in a small water-oak at the edge of the sidewalk, on a street corner, just beyond the reach of passers-by. In the roadside trees

— all freshly planted, like the city — were myrtle warblers, prairie warblers, and blue yellowbacks, the two latter in song. Once, after a shower, I watched a myrtle bird bathing on a branch among the wet leaves. The street gutters were running with sulphur water, but he had waited for rain. I commended his taste, being myself one of those to whom water and brimstone is a combination as malodorous as it seems unscriptural. Noisy boat-tailed grackles, or "jackdaws," were plentiful about the lakeside, monstrously long in the tail, and almost as large as the fish crows, which were often there with them. Over the broad lake swept purple martins and white-breasted swallows, and nearer the shore fed peacefully a few pied-billed grebes, or dabchicks, birds that I had seen only two or three times before, and at which I looked more than once before I made out what they were. They had every appearance of passing a winter of content. At the tops of three or four stakes, which stood above the water at wide intervals, — and at long distances from the shore, — sat commonly as many cormorants, here, as everywhere, with

plenty of idle time upon their hands. On the other side of the city were orange groves, large, well kept, thrifty looking; the fruit still on the trees (March 20, or thereabouts), or lying in heaps underneath, ready for the boxes. One man's house, I remember, was surrounded by a fence overrun with Cherokee rosebushes, a full quarter of a mile of white blossoms.

My best botanical stroll was along one of the railroads (Sanford is a "railway centre," so called), through a dreary sand waste. Here I picked a goodly number of novelties, including what looked like a beautiful pink chicory, only the plant itself was much prettier (*Lygodesmia*); a very curious sensitive-leaved plant (*Schrankia*), densely beset throughout with curved prickles, and bearing globes of tiny pink-purple flowers; a calopogon, quite as pretty as our Northern *pulchellus;* a clematis (*Baldwinii*), which looked more like a bluebell than a clematis till I commenced pulling it to pieces; and a great profusion of one of the smaller papaws, or custard-apples, a low shrub, just then full of large, odd-shaped, creamy-white, heavy-scented

blossoms. I was carrying a sprig of it in my hand when I met a negro. "What is this?" I asked. "I dunno, sir." "Is n't it papaw?" "No, sir, that ain't papaw;" and then, as if he had just remembered something, he added, "That 's dog banana."

Oftener than anywhere else I resorted to the shore of the lake, — to the one small part of it, that is to say, which was at the same time easily reached and comparatively unfrequented. There — going one day farther than usual — I found myself in the borderland of a cypress swamp. On one side was the lake, but between me and it were cypress-trees; and on the other side was the swamp itself, a dense wood growing in stagnant black water covered here and there with duckweed or some similar growth: a frightful place it seemed, the very abode of snakes and everything evil. Stories of slaves hiding in cypress swamps came into my mind. It must have been cruel treatment that drove them to it! Buzzards flew about my head, and looked at me. "He has come here to die," I imagined them saying among themselves. "No one comes here for anything else. Wait a little, and

we will pick his bones." They perched near by, and, not to lose time, employed the interval in drying their wings, for the night had been showery. Once in a while one of them shifted his perch with an ominous rustle. They were waiting for me, and were becoming impatient. "He is long about it," one said to another; and I did not wonder. The place seemed one from which none who entered it could ever go out; and there was no going farther in without plunging into that horrible mire. I stood still, and looked and listened. Some strange noise, "bird or devil," came from the depths of the wood. A flock of grackles settled in a tall cypress, and for a time made the place loud. How still it was after they were gone! I could hardly withdraw my gaze from the green water full of slimy black roots and branches, any one of which might suddenly lift its head and open its deadly white mouth! Once a fish-hawk fell to screaming farther down the lake. I had seen him the day before, standing on the rim of his huge nest in the top of a tree, and uttering the same cries. All about me gigantic cypresses, every one swollen

enormously at the base, rose straight and branchless into the air. Dead trees, one might have said, — light-colored, apparently with no bark to cover them; but if I glanced up, I saw that each bore at the top a scanty head of branches just now putting forth fresh green leaves, while long funereal streamers of dark Spanish moss hung thickly from every bough.

I am not sure how long I could have stayed in such a spot, if I had not been able to look now and then through the branches of the under-woods out upon the sunny lake. Swallows innumerable were playing over the water, many of them soaring so high as to be all but invisible. Wise and happy birds, lovers of sunlight and air. *They* would never be found in a cypress swamp. Along the shore, in a weedy shallow, the peaceful dabchicks were feeding. Far off on a post toward the middle of the lake stood a cormorant. But I could not keep my eyes long at once in that direction. The dismal swamp had me under its spell, and meanwhile the patient buzzards looked at me. "It is almost time," they said; "the fever will do its work," — and I began to

believe it. It was too bad to come away; the stupid town offered no attraction; but it seemed perilous to remain. Perhaps I *could* not come away. I would try it and see. It was amazing that I could; and no sooner was I out in the sunshine than I wished I had stayed where I was; for having once left the place, I was never likely to find it again. The way was plain enough, to be sure, and my feet would no doubt serve me. But the feet cannot do the mind's part, and it is a sad fact, one of the saddest in life, that sensations cannot be repeated.

With the fascination of the swamp still upon me, I heard somewhere in the distance a musical voice, and soon came in sight of a garden where a middle-aged negro was hoeing, — hoeing and singing: a wild, minor, endless kind of tune; a hymn, as seemed likely from a word caught here and there; a true piece of natural melody, as artless as any bird's. I walked slowly to get more of it, and the happy-sad singer minded me not, but kept on with his hoe and his song. Potatoes or corn, whatever his crop may have been, — I did not notice, or, if I did, I have forgotten, — it should have prospered under his hand.

Farther along, in the highway, — a sandy track, with wastes of scrub on either side, — a boy of eight or nine, armed with a double-barreled gun, was lingering about a patch of dwarf oaks and palmettos. "Have n't got that rabbit yet, eh?" said I. (I had passed him there on my way out, and he had told me what he was after.)

"No, sir," he answered.

"I don't believe there 's any rabbit there."

"Yes, there is, sir; I saw one a little while ago, but he got away before I could get pretty near."

"Good!" I thought. "Here is a grammarian. Not one boy in ten in this country but would have said 'I seen.'" A scholar like this was worth talking with. "Are there many rabbits here?" I asked.

"Yes, sir, there 's a good deal."

And so, by easy mental stages, I was clear of the swamp and back in the town, — saved from the horrible, and delivered to the commonplace and the dreary.

My best days in Sanford were two that I spent on the river above the lake. A youthful boatman, expert alike with the oar and the gun, served me faithfully and well,

impossible as it was for him to enter fully into the spirit of a man who wanted to look at birds, but not to kill them. I think he had never before seen a customer of that breed. First he rowed me up the "creek," under promise to show me alligators, moccasins, and no lack of birds, including the especially desired purple gallinule. The snakes were somehow missing (a loss not irreparable), and so were the purple gallinules; for them, the boy thought, it was still rather early in the season, although he had killed one a few days before, and for proof had brought me a wing. But as we were skirting along the shore I suddenly called "Hist!" An alligator lay on the bank just before us. The boy turned his head, and instantly was all excitement. It was a big fellow, he said, — one of three big ones that inhabited the creek. He would get him this time. "Are you sure?" I asked. "Oh yes, I'll blow the top of his head off." He was loaded for gallinules, and I, being no sportsman, and never having seen an alligator before, was some shades less confident. But it was his game, and I left him to his way. He pulled the

boat noiselessly against the bank in the shelter of tall reeds, put down the oars, with which he could almost have touched the alligator, and took up his gun. At that moment the creature got wind of us, and slipped incontinently into the water, not a little to my relief. One live alligator is worth a dozen dead ones, to my thinking. He showed his back above the surface of the stream for a moment shortly afterward, and then disappeared for good.

Ornithologically, the creek was a disappointment. We pushed into one bay after another, among the dense "bonnets," — huge leaves of the common yellow pond lily, — but found nothing that I had not seen before. Here and there a Florida gallinule put up its head among the leaves, or took flight as we pressed too closely upon it; but I saw them to no advantage, and with a single exception they were dumb. One bird, as it dashed into the rushes, uttered two or three cries that sounded familiar. The Florida gallinule is in general pretty silent, I think; but he has a noisy season; then he is indeed noisy enough. A swamp containing a single pair might be supposed to be

populous with barn-yard fowls, the fellow keeps up such a clatter: now loud and terror-stricken, "like a hen whose head is just going to be cut off," as a friend once expressed it; then soft and full of content, as if the aforesaid hen had laid an egg ten minutes before, and were still felicitating herself upon the achievement. It was vexatious that here, in the very home of Florida gallinules, I should see and hear less of them than I had more than once done in Massachusetts, where they are esteemed a pretty choice rarity, and where, in spite of what I suppose must be called exceptional good luck, my acquaintance with them had been limited to perhaps half a dozen birds. But in affairs of this kind a direct chase is seldom the best rewarded. At one point the boatman pulled up to a thicket of small willows, bidding me be prepared to see birds in enormous numbers; but we found only a small company of night herons — evidently breeding there — and a green heron. The latter my boy shot before I knew what he was doing. He took my reproof in good part, protesting that he had had only a glimpse of the bird, and had taken it for a

possible gallinule. In the course of the trip we saw, besides the species already named, great blue and little blue herons, pied-billed grebes, coots, cormorants, a flock of small sandpipers (on the wing), buzzards, vultures, fish-hawks, and innumerable red-winged blackbirds.

Three days afterward we went up the river. At the upper end of the lake were many white-billed coots (*Fulica americana*); so many that we did our best to count them as they rose, flock after flock, dragging their feet over the water behind them with a multitudinous splashing noise. There were a thousand, at least. They had an air of being not so very shy, but they were nobody's fools. "See there!" my boy would exclaim, as a hundred or two of them dashed past the boat; "see how they keep just out of range!"

We were hardly on the river itself before he fell into a state of something like frenzy at the sight of an otter swimming before us, showing its head, and then diving. He made after it in hot haste, and fired I know not how many times, but all for nothing. He had killed several before now, he said,

but had never been obliged to chase one in this fashion. Perhaps there was a Jonah in the ship; for though I sympathized with the boy, I sympathized also, and still more warmly, with the otter. It acted as if life were dear to it, and for aught I knew it had as good a right to live as either the boy or I.

No such qualms disturbed me a few minutes later, when, as the boat was grazing the reeds, I espied just ahead a snake lying in wait among them. I gave the alarm, and the boy looked round. "Yes," he said, "a big one, a moccasin, — a cotton-mouth; but I 'll fix him." He pulled a stroke or two nearer, then lifted his oar and brought it down splash; but the reeds broke the blow, and the moccasin slipped into the water, apparently unharmed. That was a case for powder and shot. Florida people have a poor opinion of a man who meets a venomous snake, no matter where, without doing his best to kill it. How strong the feeling is my boatman gave me proof within ten minutes after his failure with the cotton-mouth. He had pulled out into the middle of the river, when I noticed a beautiful snake, short and rather stout, lying coiled on the water.

Whether it was an optical illusion I cannot say, but it seemed to me that the creature lay entirely above the surface, — as if it had been an inflated skin rather than a live snake. We passed close by it, but it made no offer to move, only darting out its tongue as the boat slipped past. I spoke to the boy, who at once ceased rowing.

"I think I must go back and kill that fellow," he said.

"Why so?" I asked, with surprise, for I had looked upon it simply as a curiosity.

"Oh, I don't like to see it live. It 's the poisonousest snake there is."

As he spoke he turned the boat: but the snake saved him further trouble, for just then it uncoiled and swam directly toward us, as if it meant to come aboard. "Oh, you 're coming this way, are you?" said the boy sarcastically. "Well, come on!" The snake came on, and when it got well within range he took up his fishing-rod (with hooks at the end for drawing game out of the reeds and bonnets), and the next moment the snake lay dead upon the water. He slipped the end of the pole under it and slung it ashore. "There! how do you like

that?" said he, and he headed the boat upstream again. It was a "copper-bellied moccasin," he declared, whatever that may be, and was worse than a rattlesnake.

On the river, as in the creek, we were continually exploring bays and inlets, each with its promising patch of bonnets. Nearly every such place contained at least one Florida gallinule; but where were the "purples," about which we kept talking, — the "royal purples," concerning whose beauty my boy was so eloquent?

"They are not common yet," he would say. "By and by they will be as thick as Floridas are now."

"But don't they stay here all winter?"

"No, sir; not the purples."

"Are you certain about that?"

"Oh yes, sir. I have hunted this river too much. They could n't be here in the winter without my knowing it."

I wondered whether he could be right, or partly right, notwithstanding the book statements to the contrary. I notice that Mr. Chapman, writing of his experiences with this bird at Gainesville, says, "None were seen until May 25, when, in a part of the

lake before unvisited, — a mass of floating islands and 'bonnets,' — I found them not uncommon." The boy's assertions may be worth recording, at any rate.

In one place he fired suddenly, and as he put down the gun he exclaimed, "There! I'll bet I've shot a bird you never saw before. It had a bill as long as that," with one finger laid crosswise upon another. He hauled the prize into the boat, and sure enough, it was a novelty, — a king rail, new to both of us. We had gone a little farther, and were passing a prairie, on which were pools of water where the boy said he had often seen large flocks of white ibises feeding (there were none there now, alas, though we crept up with all cautiousness to peep over the bank), when all at once I descried some sharp-winged, strange-looking bird over our heads. It showed sidewise at the moment, but an instant later it turned, and I saw its long forked tail, and almost in the same breath its white head. A fork-tailed kite! and purple gallinules were for the time forgotten. It was performing the most graceful evolutions, swooping half-way to the earth from a great height, and then sweep-

ing upward again. Another minute, and I saw a second bird, farther away. I watched the nearer one till it faded from sight, soaring and swooping by turns, — its long, scissors-shaped tail all the while fully spread, — but never coming down, as its habit is said to be, to skim over the surface of the water. There is nothing more beautiful on wings, I believe: a large hawk, with a swallow's grace of form, color, and motion. I saw it once more (four birds) over the St. Mark's River, and counted the sight one of the chief rewards of my Southern winter.

At noon we rested and ate our luncheon in the shade of three or four tall palmetto-trees standing by themselves on a broad prairie, a place brightened by beds of blue iris and stretches of golden senecio, — homelike as well as pretty, both of them. Then we set out again. The day was intensely hot (March 24), and my oarsman was more than half sick with a sudden cold. I begged him to take things easily, but he soon experienced an almost miraculous renewal of his forces. In one of the first of our after-dinner bonnet patches, he seized his gun, fired, and began to shout, "A purple! a pur-

ple!" He drew the bird in, as proud as a prince. "There, sir!" he said; "did n't I tell you it was handsome? It has every color there is." And indeed it was handsome, worthy to be called the "Sultana;" with the most exquisite iridescent bluish-purple plumage, the legs yellow, or greenish-yellow (a point by which it may be distinguished from the Florida gallinule, as the bird flies from you), the bill red tipped with pale green, and the shield (on the forehead, like a continuation of the upper mandible) light blue, of a peculiar shade, "just as if it had been painted." From that moment the boy was a new creature. Again and again he spoke of his altered feelings. He could pull the boat now anywhere I wanted to go. He was perfectly fresh, he declared, although I thought he had already done a pretty good day's work under that scorching sun. I had not imagined how deeply his heart was set upon showing me the bird I was after. It made me twice as glad to see it, dead though it was.

Within an hour, on our way homeward, we came upon another. It sprang out of the lily pads, and sped toward the tall grass

of the shore. "Look! look! a purple!" the boy cried. "See his yellow legs!" Instinctively he raised his gun, but I said No. It would be inexcusable to shoot a second one; and besides, we were at that moment approaching a bird about which I felt a stronger curiosity, — a snake-bird, or water-turkey, sitting in a willow shrub at the further end of the bay. "Pull me as near it as it will let us come," I said. "I want to see as much of it as possible." At every rod or two I stopped the boat and put up my glasses, till we were within perhaps sixty feet of the bird. Then it took wing, but instead of flying away went sweeping about us. On getting round to the willows again it made as if it would alight, uttering at the same time some faint ejaculations, like "ah! ah! ah!" but it kept on for a second sweep of the circle. Then it perched in its old place, but faced us a little less directly, so that I could see the beautiful silver tracery of its wings, like the finest of embroidery, as I thought. After we had eyed it for some minutes we suddenly perceived a second bird, ten feet or so from it, in full sight. Where it came from, or how

it got there, I have no idea. Our first bird kept his bill parted, as if in distress; a peculiar action, which probably had some connection with the other bird's presence, although the two paid no attention to each other so far as we could make out. When we had watched them as long as we pleased, I told the boy to pull the boat forward till they rose. We got within thirty feet, I think. At that point they took flight, and, side by side, went soaring into the air, now flapping their wings, now sailing in unison. It was beautiful to see. As they sat in the willows and gazed about, their long necks were sometimes twisted like corkscrews, — or so they looked, at all events.

The water-turkey is one of the very oddest of birds. I am not likely to forget the impression made upon me by the first one I saw. It was standing on a prostrate log, but rose, as I drew near, and, to my surprise, mounted to a prodigious elevation, where for a long time it remained, sailing round and round with all the grace of a hen-hawk or an eagle. Its neck and head were tenuous almost beyond belief, — like a knitting-needle, I kept repeating to myself. Its tail,

too, shaped like a narrow wedge, was unconscionably long; and as the bird showed against the sky, I could think of nothing but an animated sign of addition. A better man — the Emperor Constantine, shall we say? — might have seen in it a nobler symbol.

While we were loitering down the river, later in the afternoon, an eagle made its appearance far overhead, the first one of the day. The boy, for some reason, refused to believe that it was an eagle. Nothing but a sight of its white head and tail through the glass could convince him. (The perfectly square *set* of the wings as the bird sails is a pretty strong mark, at no matter what distance.) Presently an osprey, not far from us, with a fish in his claws, set up a violent screaming. "It is because he has caught a fish," said the boy; "he is calling his mate." "No," said I, "it is because the eagle is after him. Wait a bit." In fact, the eagle was already in pursuit, and the hawk, as he always does, had begun struggling upward with all his might. That is the fish-hawk's way of appealing to Heaven against his oppressor. He was safe for that time. Three

negroes, shad-fishers, were just beyond us (we had seen them there in the morning, wading about the river setting their nets), and at the sight of them and of us, I have no doubt, the eagle turned away. The boy was not peculiar in his notion about the osprey's scream. Some one else had told me that the bird always screamed after catching a fish. But I knew better, having seen him catch a hundred, more or less, without uttering a sound. The safe rule, in such cases, is to listen to all you hear, and believe it — after you have verified it for yourself.

It was while we were discussing this question, I think, that the boy opened his heart to me about my methods of study. He had looked through the glass now and then, and of course had been astonished at its power. "Why," he said finally, "I never had any idea it could be so much fun just to look at birds in the way you do!" I liked the turn of his phrase. It seemed to say, "Yes, I begin to see through it. We are in the same boat. This that you call study is only another kind of sport." I could have shaken hands with him but that he had the oars.

Who does not love to be flattered by an ingenuous boy?

All in all, the day had been one to be remembered. In addition to the birds already named — three of them new to me — we had seen great blue herons, little blue herons, Louisiana herons, night herons, cormorants, pied-billed grebes, kingfishers, red-winged blackbirds, boat-tailed grackles, redpoll and myrtle warblers, savanna sparrows, tree swallows, purple martins, a few meadow larks, and the ubiquitous turkey buzzard. The boat-tails abounded along the river banks, and, with their tameness and their ridiculous outcries, kept us amused whenever there was nothing else to absorb our attention. The prairie lands through which the river meanders proved to be surprisingly dry and passable (the water being unusually low, the boy said), with many cattle pastured upon them. Here we found the savanna sparrows; here, too, the meadow larks were singing.

It was a hard pull across the rough lake against the wind (a dangerous sheet of water for flat-bottomed rowboats, I was told afterward), but the boy was equal to it, pro-

testing that he did n't feel tired a bit, now we had got the "purples;" and if he did not catch the fever from drinking some quarts of river water (a big bottle of coffee having proved to be only a drop in the bucket), against my urgent remonstrances and his own judgment, I am sure he looks back upon the labor as on the whole well spent. He was going North in the spring, he told me. May joy be with him wherever he is!

The next morning I took the steamer down the river to Blue Spring, a distance of some thirty miles, on my way back to New Smyrna, to a place where there were accessible woods, a beach, and, not least, a daily sea breeze. The river in that part of its course is comfortably narrow, — a great advantage, — winding through cypress swamps, hammock woods, stretches of prairie, and in one place a pine barren; an interesting and in many ways beautiful country, but so unwholesome looking as to lose much of its attractiveness. Three or four large alligators lay sunning themselves in the most obliging manner upon the banks, here one and there one, to the vociferous delight of the passengers, who ran from one side of the

deck to the other, as the captain shouted and pointed. One, he told us, was thirteen feet long, the largest in the river. Each appeared to have its own well-worn sunning-spot, and all, I believe, kept their places, as if the passing of the big steamer — almost too big for the river at some of the sharper turns — had come to seem a commonplace event. Herons in the usual variety were present, with ospreys, an eagle, kingfishers, ground doves, Carolina doves, blackbirds (red-wings and boat-tails), tree swallows, purple martins, and a single wild turkey, the first one I had ever seen. It was near the bank of the river, on a bushy prairie, fully exposed, and crouched as the steamer passed. For a Massachusetts ornithologist the mere sight of such a bird was enough to make a pretty good Thanksgiving Day. Blue yellow-backed warblers were singing here and there, and I retain a particular remembrance of one bluebird that warbled to us from the pine-woods. The captain told me, somewhat to my surprise, that he had seen two flocks of paroquets during the winter (they had been very abundant along the river within his time, he said), but for me there

was no such fortune. One bird, soaring in company with a buzzard at a most extraordinary height straight over the river, greatly excited my curiosity. The captain declared that it must be a great blue heron; but he had never seen one thus engaged, nor, so far as I can learn, has any one else ever done so. Its upper parts seemed to be mostly white, and I can only surmise that it may have been a sandhill crane, a bird which is said to have such a habit.

As I left the boat I had a little experience of the seamy side of Southern travel; nothing to be angry about, perhaps, but annoying, nevertheless, on a hot day. I surrendered my check to the purser of the boat, and the deck hands put my trunk upon the landing at Blue Spring. But there was no one there to receive it, and the station was locked. We had missed the noon train, with which we were advertised to connect, by so many hours that I had ceased to think about it. Finally, a negro, one of several who were fishing thereabouts, advised me to go "up to the house," which he pointed out behind some woods, and see the agent. This I did, and the agent, in turn, advised me to

walk up the track to the "Junction," and be sure to tell the conductor, when the evening train arrived, as it probably would do some hours later, that I had a trunk at the landing. Otherwise the train would not run down to the river, and my baggage would lie there till Monday. He would go down presently and put it under cover. Happily, he fulfilled his promise, for it was already beginning to thunder, and soon it rained in torrents, with a cold wind that made the hot weather all at once a thing of the past.

It was a long wait in the dreary little station; or rather it would have been, had not the tedium of it been relieved by the presence of a newly married couple, whose honeymoon was just then at the full. Their delight in each other was exuberant, effervescent, beatific, — what shall I say? — quite beyond veiling or restraint. At first I bestowed upon them sidewise and cornerwise glances only, hiding bashfully behind my spectacles, as it were, and pretending to see nothing; but I soon perceived that I was to them of no more consequence than a fly on the wall. If they saw me, which sometimes seemed doubtful, — for love is blind, — they

evidently thought me too sensible, or too old, to mind a little billing and cooing. And they were right in their opinion. What was I in Florida for, if not for the study of natural history? And truly, I have seldom seen, even among birds, a pair less sophisticated, less cabined and confined by that disastrous knowledge of good and evil which is commonly understood to have resulted from the eating of forbidden fruit, and which among prudish people goes by the name of modesty. It was refreshing. Charles Lamb himself would have enjoyed it, and, I should hope, would have added some qualifying footnotes to a certain unamiable essay of his concerning the behavior of married people.

ON THE ST. AUGUSTINE ROAD.

One of my first inquiries at Tallahassee was for the easiest way to the woods. The city is built on a hill, with other hills about it. These are mostly under cultivation, and such woods as lay within sight seemed to be pretty far off; and with the mercury at ninety in the shade, long tramps were almost out of the question. "Take the St. Augustine road," said the man to whom I had spoken; and he pointed out its beginning nearly opposite the state capitol. After breakfast I followed his advice, with results so pleasing that I found myself turning that corner again and again as long as I remained in Tallahassee.

The road goes abruptly downhill to the railway track, first between deep red gulches, and then between rows of negro cabins, each with its garden of rosebushes, now (early April) in full bloom. The deep sides of the gulches were draped with pendent lantana branches full of purple flowers, or,

more beautiful still, with a profusion of fragrant white honeysuckle. On the roadside, between the wheel-track and the gulch, grew brilliant Mexican poppies, with Venus's looking-glass, yellow oxalis, and beds of blackberry vines. The woods of which my informant had spoken lay a little beyond the railway, on the right hand of the road, just as it began another ascent. I entered them at once, and after a semicircular turn through the pleasant paths, amid live-oaks, water-oaks, red oaks, chestnut oaks, magnolias, beeches, hickories, hornbeams, sweet gums, sweet bays, and long-leaved and short-leaved pines, came out into the road again a quarter of a mile farther up the hill. They were the fairest of woods to stroll in, it seemed to me, with paths enough, and not too many, and good enough, but not too good; that is to say, they were footpaths, not roads, though afterwards, on a Sunday afternoon, I met two young fellows riding through them on bicycles. The wood was delightful, also, after my two months in eastern Florida, for lying on a slope, and for having an undergrowth of loose shrubbery instead of a

jungle of scrub oak and saw palmetto. Blue jays and crested flycatchers were doing their best to outscream one another, — with the odds in favor of the flycatchers, — and a few smaller birds were singing, especially two or three summer tanagers, as many yellow-throated warblers, and a ruby-crowned kinglet. In one part of the wood, near what I took to be an old city reservoir, I came upon a single white-throated sparrow and a humming-bird, — the latter a strangely uncommon sight in Tallahassee, where, of all the places I have ever seen, it ought to find itself in clover. Here, too, were a pair of Carolina wrens, just now in search of a building-site, and conducting themselves exactly in the manner of bluebirds intent on such business; peeping into every hole that offered itself, and then, after the briefest interchange of opinion, — unfavorable on the female's part, if we may guess, — concluding to look a little farther.

As I struck the road again, a man came along on horseback, and we fell into conversation about the country. "A lovely country," he called it, and I agreed with him. He inquired where I was from, and I men-

tioned that I had lately been in southern Florida, and found this region a strong contrast. "Yes," he returned; and, pointing to the grass, he remarked upon the richness of the soil. "This yere land would fertilize that," he said, speaking of southern Florida. "I should n't wonder," said I. I meant to be understood as concurring in his opinion, but such a qualified, Yankeefied assent seemed to him no assent at all. "Oh, it will, it will!" he responded, as if the point were one about which I must on no account be left unconvinced. He told me that the fine house at which I had looked, a little distance back, through a long vista of trees, was the residence of Captain H., who owned all the land along the road for a good distance. I inquired how far the road was pretty, like this. "For forty miles," he said. That was farther than I was ready to walk, and coming soon to the top of the hill, or, more exactly, of the plateau, I stopped in the shade of a china-tree, and looked at the pleasing prospect. Behind me was a plantation of young pear-trees, and before me, among the hills northward, lay broad, cultivated slopes, dotted here and there with

cabins and tall, solitary trees. On the nearer slope, perhaps a sixteenth of a mile away, a negro was ploughing, with a single ox harnessed in some primitive manner, — with pieces of wood, for the most part, as well as I could make out through an opera-glass. The soil offered the least possible hindrance, and both he and the ox seemed to be having a literal "walk-over." Beyond him — a full half-mile away, perhaps — another man was ploughing with a mule; and in another direction a third was doing likewise, with a woman following in his wake. A colored boy of seventeen — I guessed his age at twenty-three — came up the road in a cart, and I stopped him to inquire about the crops and other matters. The land in front of me was planted with cotton, he said; and the men ploughing in the distance were getting ready to plant the same. They hired the land and the cabins of Captain H., paying him so much cotton (not so much an acre, but so much a mule, if I understood him rightly) by way of rent. We talked a long time about one thing and another. He had been south as far as the Indian River country, but was glad to be back again in

Tallahassee, where he was born. I asked him about the road, how far it went. "They tell me it goes smack to St. Augustine," he replied; "I ain't tried it." It was an unlikely story, it seemed to me, but I was assured afterward that he was right; that the road actually runs across the country from Tallahassee to St. Augustine, a distance of about two hundred miles. With company of my own choosing, and in cooler weather, I thought I should like to walk its whole length.[1] My young man was in no haste. With the reins (made of rope, after a fashion much followed in Florida) lying on the forward axle of his cart, he seemed to have put himself entirely at my service. He had to the full that peculiar urbanity which I began after a while to look upon as characteristic of Tallahassee negroes, — a gentleness of speech, and a kindly, deferential air, neither forward nor servile, such as

[1] But let no enthusiast set out to walk from one city to the other on the strength of what is here written. After this sketch was first printed — in *The Atlantic Monthly* — a gentleman who ought to know whereof he speaks sent me word that my informants were all of them wrong — that the road does not run to St. Augustine. For myself, I assert nothing. As my colored boy said, "I ain't tried it."

sits well on any man, whatever the color of his skin.

In that respect he was like another boy of about his own age, who lived in the cabin directly before us, but whom I did not see till I had been several times over the road. Then he happened to be at work near the edge of the field, and I beckoned him to me. He, too, was serious and manly in his bearing, and showed no disposition to go back to his hoe till I broke off the interview, — as if it were a point of good manners with him to await my pleasure. Yes, the plantation was a good one and easily cultivated, he said, in response to some remark of my own. There were five in the family, and they all worked. "We are all big enough to eat," he added, quite simply. He had never been North, but had lately declined the offer of a gentleman who wished to take him there, — him and "another fellow." He once went to Jacksonville, but could n't stay. "You can get along without your father pretty well, but it 's another thing to do without your mother." He never meant to leave home again as long as his mother lived; which was likely to be for some years, I

thought, if she were still able to do her part in the cotton-field. As a general thing, the colored tenants of the cabins made out pretty well, he believed, unless something happened to the crops. As for the old servants of the H. family, they did n't have to work, — they were provided for; Captain H.'s father "left it so in his testimonial." I spoke of the purple martins which were flying back and forth over the field with many cheerful noises, and of the calabashes that hung from a tall pole in one corner of the cabin yard, for their accommodation. On my way South, I told him, I had noticed these dangling long-necked squashes everywhere, and had wondered what they were for. I had found out since that they were the colored man's martin-boxes, and was glad to see the people so fond of the birds. "Yes," he said, "there 's no danger of hawks carrying off the chickens as long as the martins are round."

Twice afterward, as I went up the road, I found him ploughing between the cotton rows; but he was too far away to be accosted without shouting, and I did not feel justified in interrupting him at his work.

Back and forth he went through the long furrow after the patient ox, the hens and chickens following. No doubt they thought the work was all for their benefit. Farther away, a man and two women were hoeing. The family deserved to prosper, I said to myself, as I lay under a big magnolia-tree (just beginning to open its large white flowers) and idly enjoyed the scene. And it was just here, by the bye, that I solved an interesting etymological puzzle, to wit, the origin and precise meaning of the word "baygall," — a word which the visitor often hears upon the lips of Florida people. An old hunter in Smyrna, when I questioned him about it, told me that it meant a swampy piece of wood, and took its origin, he had always supposed, from the fact that bay-trees and gall-bushes commonly grew in such places. A Tallahassee gentleman agreed with this explanation, and promised to bring home some gall-berries the next time he came across any, that I might see what they were ; but the berries were never forthcoming, and I was none the wiser, till, on one of my last trips up the St. Augustine road, as I stood under the large magnolia

just mentioned, a colored man came along, hat in hand, and a bag of grain balanced on his head.

"That 's a large magnolia," said I.

He assented.

"That 's about as large as magnolias ever grow, is n't it?"

"No, sir; down in the gall there 's magnolias a heap bigger 'n that."

"A gall? What 's that?"

"A baygall, sir."

"And what 's a baygall?"

"A big wood."

"And why do you call it a baygall?"

He was stumped, it was plain to see. No doubt he would have scratched his head, if that useful organ had been accessible. He hesitated; but it is n't like an uneducated man to confess ignorance. "'Cause it 's a desert," he said, "a thick *place*."

"Yes, yes," I answered, and he resumed his march.

The road was traveled mostly by negroes. On Sunday afternoons it looked quite like a flower garden, it was so full of bright dresses coming home from church. "Now'-days folks git religion so easy!" one young

woman said to another, as they passed me. She was a conservative. I did not join the procession, but on other days I talked, first and last, with a good many of the people; from the preacher, who carried a handsome cane and made me a still handsomer bow, down to a serious little fellow of six or seven years, whom I found standing at the foot of the hill, beside a bundle of dead wood. He was carrying it home for the family stove, and had set it down for a minute's rest. I said something about his burden, and as I went on he called after me: "What kind of birds are you hunting for? Ricebirds?" I answered that I was looking for birds of all sorts. Had he seen any ricebirds lately? Yes, he said; he started a flock the other day up on[1] the hill. "How did they look?" said I. "They is red blackbirds," he returned. This was not the first time I had heard the redwing called the ricebird. But how did the boy know me for a bird-gazer? That was a mystery. It came over me all at once that possibly I had become better known in the community than I had in the least sus-

[1] He did not say "upon" any more than Northern white boys do.

pected; and then I remembered my field-glass. That, as I could not help being aware, was an object of continual attention. Every day I saw people, old and young, black and white, looking at it with undisguised curiosity. Often they passed audible comments upon it among themselves. "How far can you see through the spyglass?" a bolder spirit would now and then venture to ask; and once, on the railway track out in the pine lands, a barefooted, happy-faced urchin made a guess that was really admirable for its ingenuity. "Looks like you 're goin' over inspectin' the wire," he remarked. On rare occasions, as an act of special grace, I offered such an inquirer a peep through the magic lenses, — an experiment that never failed to elicit exclamations of wonder. Things were so near! And the observer looked comically incredulous, on putting down the glass, to find how suddenly the landscape had slipped away again. More than one colored man wanted to know its price, and expressed a fervent desire to possess one like it; and probably, if I had ever been assaulted and robbed in all my solitary wanderings through the flat-woods

and other lonesome places, my "spyglass" rather than my purse — the "lust of the eye" rather than the "pride of life" — would have been to thank.

Here, however, there could be no thought of such a contingency. Here were no vagabonds (one inoffensive Yankee specimen excepted), but hard-working people going into the city or out again, each on his own lawful business. Scarcely one of them, man or woman, but greeted me kindly. One, a white man on horseback, invited, and even urged me, to mount his horse, and let him walk a piece. I must be fatigued, he was sure, — how could I help it? — and he would as soon walk as not. Finding me obstinate, he walked his horse at my side, chatting about the country, the trees, and the crops. He it was who called my particular attention to the abundance of blackberry vines. "Are the berries sweet?" I asked. He smacked his lips. "Sweet as honey, and big as that," measuring off a liberal portion of his thumb. I spoke of them half an hour later to a middle-aged colored man. Yes, he said, the blackberries were plenty enough and sweet enough; but,

for his part, he did n't trouble them a great deal. The vines (and he pointed at them, fringing the roadside indefinitely) were great places for rattlesnakes. He liked the berries, but he liked somebody else to pick them. He was awfully afraid of snakes; they were so dangerous. "Yes, sir" (this in answer to an inquiry), "there are plenty of rattlesnakes here clean up to Christmas." I liked him for his frank avowal of cowardice, and still more for his quiet bearing. He remembered the days of slavery, — "before the surrender," as the current Southern phrase is, — and his face beamed when I spoke of my joy in thinking that his people were free, no matter what might befall them. He, too, raised cotton on hired land, and was bringing up his children — there were eight of them, he said — to habits of industry.

My second stroll toward St. Augustine carried me perhaps three miles, — say one sixty-sixth of the entire distance, — and none of my subsequent excursions took me any farther; and having just now commended a negro for his candor, I am moved to acknowledge that, between the sand un-

derfoot and the sun overhead, I found the six miles, which I spent at least four hours in accomplishing, more fatiguing than twice that distance would have been over New Hampshire hills. If I were to settle in that country, I should probably fall into the way of riding more, and walking less. I remember thinking how comfortable a certain ponderous black mammy looked, whom I met on one of these same sunny and sandy tramps. She sat in the very middle of a tipcart, with an old and truly picturesque man's hat on her head (quite in the fashion, feminine readers will notice), driving a one-horned ox with a pair of clothes-line reins. She was traveling slowly, just as I like to travel; and, as I say, I was impressed by her comfortable appearance. Why would not an equipage like that be just the thing for a naturalistic idler?

Not far beyond my halting-place of two days before I came to a Cherokee rosebush, one of the most beautiful of plants, — white, fragrant, single roses (*real* roses) set in the midst of the handsomest of glossy green leaves. I was delighted to find it still in flower. A hundred miles farther south I

had seen it finishing its season a full month earlier. I stopped, of course, to pluck a blossom. At that moment a female redbird flew out of the bush. Her mate was beside her instantly, and a nameless something in their manner told me they were trying to keep a secret. The nest, built mainly of pine needles and other leaves, was in the middle of the bush, a foot or two from the grass, and contained two bluish or greenish eggs thickly spattered with dark brown. I meant to look into it again (the owners seemed to have no great objection), but somehow missed it every time I passed. From that point, as far as I went, the road was lined with Cherokee roses, — not continuously, but with short intermissions; and from the number of redbirds seen, almost invariably in pairs, I feel safe in saying that the nest I had found was probably one of fifteen or twenty scattered along the wayside. How gloriously the birds sang! It was their day for singing. I was ready to christen the road anew, — Redbird Road.

But the redbirds, many and conspicuous as they were, had no monopoly of the road or of the day. House wrens were equally

numerous and equally at home, though they sang more out of sight. Red-eyed chewinks, still far from their native berry pastures, hopped into a bush to cry, "Who 's he?" at the passing of a stranger, in whom, for aught I know, they may have half recognized an old acquaintance. A bunch of quails ran across the road a little in front of me, and in another place fifteen or twenty red-winged blackbirds (not a red wing among them) sat gossiping in a treetop. Elsewhere, even later than this (it was now April 7), I saw flocks, every bird of which wore shoulder-straps, — like the traditional militia company, all officers. *They* did not gossip, of course (it is the male that sports the red), but they made a lively noise.

As for the mocking-birds, they were at the front here, as they were everywhere. During my fortnight in Tallahassee there were never many consecutive five minutes of daylight in which, if I stopped to listen, I could not hear at least one mocker. Oftener two or three were singing at once in as many different directions. And, speaking of them, I must speak also of their more northern cousin. From the day I

entered Florida I had been saying that the mocking-bird, save for his occasional mimicry of other birds, sang so exactly like the thrasher that I did not believe I could tell one from the other. Now, however, on this St. Augustine road, I suddenly became aware of a bird singing somewhere in advance, and as I listened again I said aloud, with full persuasion, "There! that's a thrasher!" There was a something of difference: a shade of coarseness in the voice, perhaps; a tendency to force the tone, as we say of human singers, — a *something,* at all events, and the longer I hearkened, the more confident I felt that the bird was a thrasher. And so it was, — the first one I had heard in Florida, although I had seen many. Probably the two birds have peculiarities of voice and method that, with longer familiarity on the listener's part, would render them easily distinguishable. On general principles, I must believe that to be true of all birds. But the experience just described is not to be taken as proving that *I* have any such familiarity. Within a week afterward, while walking along the railway, I came upon a thrasher

and a mocking-bird singing side by side; the mocker upon a telegraph pole, and the thrasher on the wire, halfway between the mocker and the next pole. They sang and sang, while I stood between them in the cut below and listened; and if my life had depended on my seeing how one song differed from the other, I could not have done it. With my eyes shut, the birds might have changed places, — if they could have done it quickly enough, — and I should have been none the wiser.

As I have said, I followed the road over the nearly level plateau for what I guessed to be about three miles. Then I found myself in a bit of hollow that seemed made for a stopping-place, with a plantation road running off to the right, and a hillside cornfield of many acres on the left. In the field were a few tall dead trees. At the tip of one sat a sparrow-hawk, and to the trunk of another clung a red-bellied woodpecker, who, with characteristic foolishness, sat beside his hole calling persistently, and then, as if determined to publish what other birds so carefully conceal, went inside, thrust out his head, and resumed his clatter. Here,

too, were a pair of bluebirds, noticeable for their rarity, and for the wonderful color — a shade deeper than is ever seen at the North, I think — of the male's blue coat. In a small thicket in the hollow beside the road were noisy white-eyed vireos, a ruby-crowned kinglet, — a tiny thing that within a month would be singing in Canada, or beyond, — an unseen wood pewee, and (also unseen) a hermit thrush, one of perhaps twenty solitary individuals that I found scattered about the woods in the course of my journeyings. Not one of them sang a note. Probably they did not know that there was a Yankee in Florida who — in some moods, at least — would have given more for a dozen bars of hermit thrush music than for a day and a night of the mocking-bird's medley. Not that I mean to disparage the great Southern performer; as a vocalist he is so far beyond the hermit thrush as to render a comparison absurd; but what I love is a *singer*, a voice to reach the soul. An old Tallahassee negro, near the "white Norman school," — so he called it, — hit off the mocking-bird pretty well. I had called his attention to one singing in an adjacent

dooryard. "Yes," he said, "I love to hear 'em. They 's very amusin', very amusin'." My own feeling can hardly be a prejudice, conscious or unconscious, in favor of what has grown dear to me through early and long-continued association. The difference between the music of birds like the mocker, the thrasher, and the catbird and that of birds like the hermit, the veery, and the wood thrush is one of kind, not of degree; and I have heard music of the mocking-bird's kind (the thrasher's, that is to say) as long as I have heard music at all. The question is one of taste, it is true; but it is not a question of familiarity or favoritism. All praise to the mocker and the thrasher! May their tribe increase! But if we are to indulge in comparisons, give me the wood thrush, the hermit, and the veery; with tones that the mocking-bird can never imitate, and a simplicity which the Fates — the wise Fates, who will have variety — have put forever beyond his appreciation and his reach.

Florida as I saw it (let the qualification be noted) is no more a land of flowers than New England. In some respects, indeed, it

is less so. Flowering shrubs and climbers there are in abundance. I rode in the cars through miles on miles of flowering dogwood and pink azalea. Here, on this Tallahassee road, were miles of Cherokee roses, with plenty of the climbing scarlet honeysuckle (beloved of humming-birds, although I saw none here), and nearer the city, as already described, masses of lantana and white honeysuckle. In more than one place pink double roses (vagrants from cultivated grounds, no doubt) offered buds and blooms to all who would have them. The cross-vine (*Bignonia*), less freehanded, hung its showy bells out of reach in the treetops. Thornbushes of several kinds were in flower (a puzzling lot), and the treelike blueberry (*Vaccinium arboreum*), loaded with its large, flaring white corollas, was a real spectacle of beauty. Here, likewise, I found one tiny crab-apple shrub, with a few blossoms, exquisitely tinted with rose-color, and most exquisitely fragrant. But the New Englander, when he talks of wild flowers, has in his eye something different from these. He is not thinking of any bush, no matter how beautiful, but of trailing

arbutus, hepaticas, bloodroot, anemones, saxifrage, violets, dogtooth violets, spring beauties, "cowslips," buttercups, corydalis, columbine, Dutchman's breeches, clintonia, five-finger, and all the rest of that bright and fragrant host which, ever since he can remember, he has seen covering his native hills and valleys with the return of May.

It is not meant, of course, that plants like these are wholly wanting in Florida. I remember an abundance of violets, blue and white, especially in the flat-woods, where also I often found pretty butterworts of two or three sorts. The smaller blue ones took very acceptably the place of hepaticas, and indeed I heard them called by that name. But, as compared with what one sees in New England, such "ground flowers," flowers which it seems perfectly natural to pluck for a nosegay, were very little in evidence. I heard Northern visitors remark the fact again and again. On this pretty road out of Tallahassee — itself a city of flower gardens — I can recall nothing of the kind except half a dozen strawberry blossoms, and the oxalis and specularia before mentioned. Probably the round-leaved hous-

tonia grew here, as it did everywhere, in small scattered patches. If there were violets as well, I can only say I have forgotten them.

Be it added, however, that at the time I did not miss them. In a garden of roses one does not begin by sighing for mignonette and lilies of the valley. Violets or no violets, there was no lack of beauty. The Southern highway surveyor, if such a personage exists, is evidently not consumed by that distressing puritanical passion for "slicking up things" which too often makes of his Northern brother something scarcely better than a public nuisance. At the South you will not find a woman cultivating with pain a few exotics beside the front door, while her husband is mowing and burning the far more attractive wild garden that nature has planted just outside the fence. The St. Augustine road, at any rate, after climbing the hill and getting beyond the wood, runs between natural hedges, — trees, vines, and shrubs carelessly intermingled, — not dense enough to conceal the prospect or shut out the breeze ("straight from the Gulf," as the Tallahassean is careful to inform you), but sufficient

to afford much welcome protection from the sun. Here it was good to find the sassafras growing side by side with the persimmon, although when, for old acquaintance' sake, I put a leaf into my mouth I was half glad to fancy it a thought less savory than some I had tasted in Yankeeland. I took a kind of foolish satisfaction, too, in the obvious fact that certain plants — the sumach and the Virginia creeper, to mention no others — were less at home here than a thousand miles farther north. With the wild-cherry trees, I was obliged to confess, the case was reversed. I had seen larger ones in Massachusetts, perhaps, but none that looked half so clean and thrifty. In truth, their appearance was a puzzle, rum-cherry trees as by all tokens they undoubtedly were, till of a sudden it flashed upon me that there were no caterpillars' nests in them! Then I ceased to wonder at their odd look. It spoke well for my botanical acumen that I had recognized them at all.

Before I had been a week in Tallahassee I found that, without forethought or plan, I had dropped into the habit (and how pleasant it is to think that some good habits *can* be dropped into!) of making the St. Augus-

tine road my after-dinner sauntering-place. The morning was for a walk: to Lake Bradford, perhaps, in search of a mythical ivory-billed woodpecker, or westward on the railway for a few miles, with a view to rare migratory warblers. But in the afternoon I did not walk, — I loitered; and though I still minded the birds and flowers, I for the most part forgot my botany and ornithology. In the cool of the day, then (the phrase is an innocent euphemism), I climbed the hill, and after an hour or two on the plateau strolled back again, facing the sunset through a vista of moss-covered live-oaks and sweet gums. Those quiet, incurious hours are among the pleasantest of all my Florida memories. A cuckoo would be cooing, perhaps; or a quail, with cheerful ambiguity, — such as belongs to weather predictions in general, — would be prophesying "more wet" and "no more wet" in alternate breaths; or two or three night-hawks would be sweeping back and forth high above the valley; or a marsh hawk would be quartering over the big oatfield. The martins would be cackling, in any event, and the kingbirds practicing their aerial mock somersaults; and

the mocking-bird would be singing, and the redbird whistling. On the western slope, just below the oatfield, the Northern woman who owned the pretty cottage there (the only one on the road) was sure to be at work among her flowers. A laughing colored boy who did chores for her (without injury to his health, I could warrant) told me that she was a Northerner. But I knew it already; I needed no witness but her beds of petunias. In the valley, as I crossed the railroad track, a loggerhead shrike sat, almost of course, on the telegraph wire in dignified silence; and just beyond, among the cabins, I had my choice of mocking-birds and orchard orioles.

And so, admiring the roses and the pomegranates, the lantanas and the honeysuckles, or chatting with some dusky fellow-pilgrim, I mounted the hill to the city, and likely as not saw before me a red-headed woodpecker sitting on the roof of the State House, calling attention to his patriotic self — in his tricolored dress — by occasional vigorous tattoos on the tinned ridgepole. I never saw him there without gladness. The legislature had begun its session in an economical mood, — as is more or less the habit of legis-

latures, I believe, — and was even considering a proposition to reduce the salary and mileage of its members. Under such circumstances, it ought not to have been a matter of surprise, perhaps, that no flag floated from the cupola of the capitol. The people's money should not be wasted. And possibly I should never have remarked the omission but for a certain curiosity, natural, if not inevitable, on the part of a Northern visitor, as to the real feeling of the South toward the national government. Day after day I had seen a portly gentleman — with an air, or with airs, as the spectator might choose to express it — going in and out of the State House gate, dressed ostentatiously in a suit of Confederate gray. He had worn nothing else since the war, I was told. But of course the State of Florida was not to be judged by the freak of one man, and he only a member of the "third house." And even when I went into the governor's office, and saw the original "ordinance of secession" hanging in a conspicuous place on the wall, as if it were an heirloom to be proud of, I felt no stirring of sectional animosity, thorough-bred Massachusetts Yankee and old-fashioned

abolitionist as I am. A brave people can hardly be expected or desired to forget its history, especially when that history has to do with sacrifices and heroic deeds. But these things, taken together, did no doubt prepare me to look upon it as a happy coincidence when, one morning, I heard the familiar cry of the red-headed woodpecker, for the first time in Florida, and looked up to see him flying the national colors from the ridgepole of the State House. I did not break out with "Three cheers for the red, white, and blue!" I am naturally undemonstrative; but I said to myself that *Melanerpes erythrocephalus* was a very handsome bird.

ORNITHOLOGY ON A COTTON PLANTATION.

On one of my first jaunts into the suburbs of Tallahassee I noticed not far from the road a bit of swamp, — shallow pools with muddy borders and flats. It was a likely spot for "waders," and would be worth a visit. To reach it, indeed, I must cross a planted field surrounded by a lofty barbed-wire fence and placarded against trespassers; but there was no one in sight, or no one who looked at all like a landowner; and, besides, it could hardly be accounted a trespass — defined by Blackstone as an "*unwarranted* entry on another's soil" — to step carefully over the cotton rows on so legitimate an errand. Ordinarily I call myself a simple bird-gazer, an amateur, a field naturalist, if you will; but on occasions like the present I assume — with myself, that is — all the rights and titles of an ornithologist proper, a man of science strictly so called. In the interest of science,

then, I climbed the fence and picked my way across the field. True enough, about the edges of the water were two or three solitary sandpipers, and at least half a dozen of the smaller yellowlegs, — two additions to my Florida list, — not to speak of a little blue heron and a green heron, the latter in most uncommonly green plumage. It was well I had interpreted the placard a little generously. "The letter killeth" is a pretty good text in emergencies of this kind. So I said to myself. The herons, meanwhile, had taken French leave, but the smaller birds were less suspicious: I watched them at my leisure, and left them still feeding.

Two days later I was there again, but it must be acknowledged that this time I tarried in the road till a man on horseback had disappeared round the next turn. It would have been manlier, without doubt, to pay no attention to him: but something told me that he was the cotton-planter himself, and, for better or worse, prudence carried the day with me. Finding nothing new, though the sandpipers and yellowlegs were still present, with a very handsome little blue heron and

plenty of blackbirds, I took the road again and went further, and an hour or two afterward, on getting back to the same place, was overtaken again by the horseman. He pulled up his horse and bade me good-afternoon. Would I lend him my opera-glass, which happened to be in my hand at the moment? "I should like to see how my house looks from here," he said; and he pointed across the field to a house on the hill some distance beyond. "Ah," said I, glad to set myself right by a piece of frankness that under the circumstances could hardly work to my disadvantage; "then it is your land on which I have been trespassing." "How so?" he asked, with a smile; and I explained that I had been across his cotton-field a little while before. "That is no trespass," he answered (so the reader will perceive that I had been quite correct in my understanding of the law); and when I went on to explain my object in visiting his cane-swamp (for such it was, he said, but an unexpected freshet had ruined the crop when it was barely out of the ground), he assured me that I was welcome to visit it as often as I wished. He himself

was very fond of natural history, and often regretted that he had not given time to it in his youth. As it was, he protected the birds on his plantation, and the place was full of them. I should find his woods interesting, he felt sure. Florida was extremely rich in birds; he believed there were some that had never been classified. "We have orioles here," he added; and so far, at any rate, he was right; I had seen perhaps twenty that day (orchard orioles, that is), and one sat in a tree before us at the moment. His whole manner was most kindly and hospitable, — as was that of every Tallahassean with whom I had occasion to speak, — and I told him with sincere gratitude that I should certainly avail myself of his courtesy and stroll through his woods.

I approached them, two mornings afterward, from the opposite side, where, finding no other place of entrance, I climbed a six-barred, tightly locked gate — feeling all the while like "a thief and a robber" — in front of a deserted cabin. Then I had only to cross a grassy field, in which meadow larks were singing, and I was in the woods. I wandered through them without finding any-

thing more unusual or interesting than summer tanagers and yellow-throated warblers, which were in song there, as they were in every such place, and after a while came out into a pleasant glade, from which different parts of the plantation could be seen, and through which ran a plantation road. Here was a wooden fence, — a most unusual thing, — and I lost no time in mounting it, to rest and look about me. It is one of the marks of a true Yankee, I suspect, to like such a perch. My own weakness in that direction is a frequent subject of mirth with chance fellow travelers. The attitude is comfortable and conducive to meditation; and now that I was seated and at my ease, I felt that this was one of the New England luxuries which, almost without knowing it, I had missed ever since I left home.

Of my meditations on this particular occasion I remember nothing; but that is no sign they were valueless; as it is no sign that yesterday's dinner did me no good because I have forgotten what it was. In the latter case, indeed, and perhaps in the former as well, it would seem more reasonable to draw an exactly opposite inference. But,

quibbles apart, one thing I do remember: I sat for some time on the fence, in the shade of a tree, with an eye upon the cane-swamp and an ear open for bird-voices. Yes, and it comes to me at this moment that here I heard the first and only bull-frog that I heard anywhere in Florida. It was like a voice from home, and belonged with the fence. Other frogs I had heard in other places. One chorus brought me out of bed in Daytona — in the evening — after a succession of February dog-day showers. "What is that noise outside?" I inquired of the landlady as I hastened downstairs. "That?" said she, with a look of amusement; "that 's frogs." "It *may* be," I thought, but I followed the sounds till they led me in the darkness to the edge of a swamp. No doubt the creatures were frogs, but of some kind new to me, with voices more lugubrious and homesick than I should have supposed could possibly belong to any batrachian. A week or two later, in the New Smyrna flatwoods, I heard in the distance a sound which I took for the grunting of pigs. I made a note of it, mentally, as a cheerful token, indicative of a probable scarcity of rattle-

snakes; but by and by, as I drew nearer, the truth of the matter began to break upon me. A man was approaching, and when we met I asked him what was making that noise yonder. "Frogs," he said. At another time, in the flat-woods of Port Orange (I hope I am not taxing my reader's credulity too far, or making myself out a man of too imaginative an ear), I heard the bleating of sheep. Busy with other things, I did not stop to reflect that it was impossible there should be sheep in that quarter, and the occurrence had quite passed out of my mind when, one day, a cracker, talking about frogs, happened to say, "Yes, and we have one kind that makes a noise exactly like the bleating of sheep." That, without question, was what I had heard in the flat-woods. But this frog in the sugar-cane swamp was the same fellow that on summer evenings, ever and ever so many years ago, in sonorous bass that could be heard a quarter of a mile away, used to call from Reuben Loud's pond, "Pull him in! Pull him in!" or sometimes (the inconsistent amphibian), "Jug o' rum! Jug o' rum!"

I dismounted from my perch at last, and

was sauntering idly along the path (idleness like this is often the best of ornithological industry), when suddenly I had a vision! Before me, in the leafy top of an oak sapling, sat a blue grosbeak. I knew him on the instant. But I could see only his head and neck, the rest of his body being hidden by the leaves. It was a moment of feverish excitement. Here was a new bird, a bird about which I had felt fifteen years of curiosity; and, more than that, a bird which here and now was quite unexpected, since it was not included in either of the two Florida lists that I had brought with me from home. For perhaps five seconds I had my opera-glass on the blue head and the thick-set, dark bill, with its lighter-colored under mandible. Then I heard the clatter of a horse's hoofs, and lifted my eyes. My friend the owner of the plantation was coming down the road at a gallop, straight upon me. If I was to see the grosbeak and make sure of him, it must be done at once. I moved to bring him fully into view, and he flew into the thick of a pine-tree out of sight. But the tree was not far off, and if Mr. —— would pass me with a nod, the case was still

far from hopeless. A bright thought came to me. I ran from the path with a great show of eager absorption, leveled my glass upon the pine-tree, and stood fixed. Perhaps Mr. —— would take the hint. Alas! he had too much courtesy to pass his own guest without speaking. "Still after the birds?" he said, as he checked his horse. I responded, as I hope, without any symptom of annoyance. Then, of course, he wished to know what I was looking at, and I told him that a blue grosbeak had just flown into that pine-tree, and that I was most distressingly anxious to see more of him. He looked at the pine-tree. "I can't see him," he said. No more could I. "It was n't a blue jay, was it?" he asked. And then we talked of one thing and another, I have no idea what, till he rode away to another part of the plantation where a gang of women were at work. By this time the grosbeak had disappeared utterly. Possibly he had gone to a bit of wood on the opposite side of the cane-swamp. I scaled a barbed-wire fence and made in that direction, but to no purpose. The grosbeak was gone for good. Probably I should never see another. Could the planter have

read my thoughts just then he would perhaps have been angry with himself, and pretty certainly he would have been angry with me. That a Yankee should accept his hospitality, and then load him with curses and call him all manner of names! How should he know that I was so insane a hobbyist as to care more for the sight of a new bird than for all the laws and customs of ordinary politeness? As my feelings cooled, I saw that I was stepping over hills or rows of some strange-looking plants just out of the ground. Peanuts, I guessed; but to make sure I called to a colored woman who was hoeing not far off. "What are these?" "Pinders," she answered. I knew she meant peanuts,— otherwise "ground-peas" and "goobers," — and now that I once more have a dictionary at my elbow I learn that the word, like "goober," is, or is supposed to be, of African origin.

I was preparing to surmount the barbed-wire fence again, when the planter returned and halted for another chat. It was evident that he took a genuine and amiable interest in my researches. There were a great many kinds of sparrows in that country, he said, and also of woodpeckers. He knew the

ivory-bill, but, like other Tallahasseans, he thought I should have to go into Lafayette County (all Florida people say La*fay*ette) to find it. "That bird calling now is a bee-bird," he said, referring to a kingbird; "and we have a bird that is called the French mocking-bird; he catches other birds." The last remark was of interest for its bearing upon a point about which I had felt some curiosity, and, I may say, some skepticism, as I had seen many loggerhead shrikes, but had observed no indication that other birds feared them or held any grudge against them. As he rode off he called my attention to a great blue heron just then flying over the swamp. "They are very shy," he said. Then, from further away, he shouted once more to ask if I heard the mocking-bird singing yonder, pointing with his whip in the direction of the singer.

For some time longer I hung about the glade, vainly hoping that the grosbeak would again favor my eyes. Then I crossed more planted fields, — climbing more barbed-wire fences, and stopping on the way to enjoy the sweetly quaint music of a little chorus of white-crowned sparrows, — and skirted once

more the muddy shore of the cane-swamp, where the yellowlegs and sandpipers were still feeding. That brought me to the road from which I had made my entry to the place some days before; but, being still unable to forego a splendid possibility, I recrossed the plantation, tarried again in the glade, sat again on the wooden fence (if that grosbeak only *would* show himself!), and thence went on, picking a few heads of handsome buffalo clover, the first I had ever seen, and some sprays of penstemon, till I came again to the six-barred gate and the Quincy road. At that point, as I now remember, the air was full of vultures (carrion crows), a hundred or more, soaring over the fields in some fit of gregariousness. Along the road were white-crowned and white-throated sparrows (it was the 12th of April), orchard orioles, thrashers, summer tanagers, myrtle and paim warblers, cardinal grosbeaks, mocking-birds, kingbirds, loggerheads, yellow-throated vireos, and sundry others, but not the blue grosbeak, which would have been worth them all.

Once back at the hotel, I opened my Coues's Key to refresh my memory as to

the exact appearance of that bird. "Feathers around base of bill black," said the book. I had not noticed that. But no matter; the bird was a blue grosbeak, for the sufficient reason that it could not be anything else. A black line between the almost black beak and the dark-blue head would be inconspicuous at the best, and quite naturally would escape a glimpse so hasty as mine had been. And yet, while I reasoned in this way, I foresaw plainly enough that, as time passed, doubt would get the better of assurance, as it always does, and I should never be certain that I had not been the victim of some illusion. At best, the evidence was worth nothing for others. If only that excellent Mr. ——, for whose kindness I was unfeignedly thankful (and whose pardon I most sincerely beg if I seem to have been a bit too free in this rehearsal of the story), — if only Mr. —— could have left me alone for ten minutes longer!

The worry and the imprecations were wasted, after all, as, Heaven be thanked, they so often are; for within two or three days I saw other blue grosbeaks and heard them sing. But that was not on a cotton plantation, and is part of another story.

A FLORIDA SHRINE.

All pilgrims to Tallahassee visit the Murat place. It is one of the most conveniently accessible of those "points of interest" with which guide-books so anxiously, and with so much propriety, concern themselves. What a tourist prays for is something to see. If I had ever been a tourist in Boston, no doubt I should before now have surveyed the world from the top of the Bunker Hill monument. In Tallahassee, at all events, I went to the Murat estate. In fact, I went more than once; but I remember especially my first visit, which had a livelier sentimental interest than the others because I was then under the agreeable delusion that the Prince himself had lived there. The guide-book told me so, vouchsafing also the information that after building the house he "interested himself actively in local affairs, became a naturalized citizen, and served successively as postmaster, alderman, and mayor" — a model immigrant, surely,

though it is rather the way of immigrants, perhaps, not to refuse political responsibilities.

Naturally, I remembered these things as I stood in front of "the big house" — a story-and-a-half cottage — amid the flowering shrubs. Here lived once the son of the King of Naples; himself a Prince, and — worthy son of a worthy sire — alderman and then mayor of the city of Tallahassee. Thus did an uncompromising democrat pay court to the shades of Royalty, while a mocking-bird sang from a fringe-bush by the gate, and an oriole flew madly from tree to tree in pursuit of a fair creature of the reluctant sex.

The inconsistency, if such it was, was quickly punished. For, alas! when I spoke of my morning's pilgrimage to an old resident of the town, he told me that Murat never lived in the house, nor anywhere else in Tallahassee, and of course was never its postmaster, alderman, or mayor. The Princess, he said, built the house after her husband's death, and lived there, a widow. I appealed to the guide-book. My informant sneered, — politely, — and brought me a

still older Tallahassean, Judge ——, whose venerable name I am sorry to have forgotten, and that indisputable citizen confirmed all that his neighbor had said. For once, the guide-book compiler must have been misinformed.

The question, happily, was one of no great consequence. If the Prince had never lived in the house, the Princess had; and she, by all accounts (and I make certain her husband would have said the same), was the worthier person of the two. And even if neither of them had lived there, if my sentiment had been *all* wasted (but there was no question of tears), the place itself was sightly, the house was old, and the way thither a pleasant one — first down the hill in a zigzag course to the vicinity of the railway station, then by a winding country road through the valley past a few negro cabins, and up the slope on the farther side. Prince Murat, or no Prince Murat, I should love to travel that road to-day, instead of sitting before a Massachusetts fire, with the ground deep under snow, and the air full of thirty or forty degrees of frost.

In the front yard of one of the cabins op-

posite the car-wheel foundry, and near the station, as I now remember, a middle-aged negress was cutting up an oak log. She swung the axe with vigor and precision, and the chips flew; but I could not help saying, "You ought to make the man do that."

She answered on the instant. "I would," she said, "if I had a man to *make*."

"I 'm sure you would," I thought. Her tongue was as sharp as her axe.

Ought I to have ventured a word in her behalf, I wonder, when a man of her own color, and a pretty near neighbor, told me with admirable *naïveté* the story of his bereavement and his hopes? His wife had died a year before, he said, and so far, though he had not let the grass grow under his feet, he had found no one to take her place. He still meant to do so, if he could. He was only seventy-four years old, and it was not good for a man to be alone. He seemed a gentle spirit, and I withheld all mention of the stalwart and manless wood-cutter. I hope he went farther, and fared better. So youthful as he was, surely there was no occasion for haste.

When I had skirted a cotton-field — the

crop just out of the ground — and a bit of wood on the right, and a swamp with a splendid display of white water-lilies on the left, and had begun to ascend the gentle slope, I met a man of considerably more than seventy-four years.

"Can you tell me just where the Murat place is?" I inquired.

He grinned broadly, and thought he could. He was one of the old Murat servants, as his father had been before him. "I was borned on to him," he said, speaking of the Prince. Murat was "a gentleman, sah." That was a statement which it seemed impossible for him to repeat often enough. He spoke from a slave's point of view. Murat was a good master. The old man had heard him say that he kept servants "for the like of the thing." He did n't abuse them. He "never was for barbarizing a poor colored person at all." Whipping? Oh, yes. "He did n't miss your fault. No, sah, he did n't miss your fault." But his servants never were "ironed." He "did n't believe in barbarousment."

The old man was thankful to be free; but to his mind emancipation had not made

everything heavenly. The younger set of negroes ("my people" was his word) were on the wrong road. They had "sold their birthright," though exactly what he meant by that remark I did not gather. "They ain't got no sense," he declared, "and what sense they has got don't do 'em no good."

I told him finally that I was from the North. "Oh, I knows it," he exclaimed, "I knows it;" and he beamed with delight. How did he know, I inquired. "Oh, I knows it. I can see it *in* you. Anybody would know it that had any jedgment at all. You's a perfect gentleman, sah." He was too old to be quarreled with, and I swallowed the compliment.

I tore myself away, or he might have run on till night — about his old master and mistress, the division of the estate, an abusive overseer ("he was a perfect dog, sah!"), and sundry other things. He had lived a long time, and had nothing to do now but to recall the past and tell it over. So it will be with us, if we live so long. May we find once in a while a patient listener.

This patriarch's unfavorable opinion as to the prospects of the colored people was

shared by my hopeful young widower before mentioned, who expressed himself quite as emphatically. He was brought up among white people ("I 's been taughted a heap," he said), and believed that the salvation of the blacks lay in their recognition of white supremacy. But he was less perspicacious than the older man. He was one of the very few persons whom I met at the South who did not recognize me at sight as a Yankee. "Are you a legislator-man?" he asked, at the end of our talk. The legislature was in session on the hill. But perhaps, after all, he only meant to flatter me.

If I am long on the way, it is because, as I love always to have it, the going and coming were the better part of the pilgrimage. The estate itself is beautifully situated, with far-away horizons; but it has fallen into great neglect, while the house, almost in ruins, and occupied by colored people, is to Northern eyes hardly more than a larger cabin. It put me in mind of the question of a Western gentleman whom I met at St. Augustine. He had come to Florida against his will, the weather and the doctor having combined against him, and was looking at

everything through very blue spectacles. "Have you seen any of those fine old country mansions," he asked, "about which we read so often in descriptions of Southern life?" He had been on the lookout for them, he averred, ever since he left home, and had yet to find the first one; and from his tone it was evident that he thought the Southern idea of a "fine old mansion" must be different from his.

The Murat house, certainly, was never a palace, except as love may have made it so. But it was old; people had lived in it, and died in it; those who once owned it, whose name and memory still clung to it, were now in narrower houses; and it was easy for the visitor — for one visitor, at least — to fall into pensive meditation. I strolled about the grounds; stood between the last year's cotton-rows, while a Carolina wren poured out his soul from an oleander bush near by; admired the confidence of a pair of shrikes, who had made a nest in a honeysuckle vine in the front yard; listened to the sweet music of mocking-birds, cardinals, and orchard orioles; watched the martins circling above

the trees; thought of the Princess, and smiled at the black children who thrust their heads out of the windows of her "big house;" and then, with a sprig of honeysuckle for a keepsake, I started slowly homeward.

The sun by this time was straight overhead, but my umbrella saved me from absolute discomfort, while birds furnished here and there an agreeable diversion. I recall in particular some white-crowned sparrows, the first ones I had seen in Florida. At a bend in the road opposite the water-lily swamp, while I was cooling myself in the shade of a friendly pine-tree, — enjoying at the same time a fence overrun with Cherokee roses, — a man and his little boy came along in a wagon. The man seemed really disappointed when I told him that I was going into town, instead of coming from it. It was pretty warm weather for walking, and he had meant to offer me a lift. He was a Scandinavian, who had been for some years in Florida. He owned a good farm not far from the Murat estate, which latter he had been urged to buy; but he thought a man was n't any better off for owning too much

land. He talked of his crops, his children, the climate, and so on, all in a cheerful strain, pleasant to hear. If the pessimists are right, — which may I be kept from believing, — the optimists are certainly more comfortable to live with, though it be only for ten minutes under a roadside shade-tree.

When I reached the street-car track at the foot of the hill, the one car which plies back and forth through the city was in its place, with the driver beside it, but no mules.

"Are you going to start directly?" I asked.

"Yes, sah," he answered; and then, looking toward the stable, he shouted in a peremptory voice, "Do about, there! Do about!"

"What does that mean?" said I. "Hurry up?"

"Yes, sah, that 's it. 'T ain't everybody that wants to be hurried up; so we tells 'em, 'Do about!'"

Half a minute afterwards two very neatly dressed little colored boys stepped upon the rear platform.

"Where you goin'?" said the driver. "Up town?"

They said they were.

"Well, come inside. Stay out there, and you 'll git hurt and cost this dried-up company more money than you's wuth."

They dropped into seats by the rear door. He motioned them to the front corner. "Sit down there," he said, "right there." They obeyed, and as he turned away he added, what I found more and more to be true, as I saw more of him, "I ain't de boss, but I 's got right smart to say."

Then he whistled to the mules, flourished his whip, and to a persistent accompaniment of whacks and whistles we went crawling up the hill.

WALKS ABOUT TALLAHASSEE.

I ARRIVED at Tallahassee, from Jacksonville, late in the afternoon, after a hot and dusty ride of more than eight hours. The distance is only a hundred and sixty odd miles, I believe; but with some bright exceptions, Southern railroads, like Southern men, seem to be under the climate, and schedule time is more or less a formality.

For the first two thirds of the way the country is flat and barren. Happily, I sat within earshot of an amateur political economist, who, like myself, was journeying to the State capital. By birth and education he was a New York State man, I heard him say; an old abolitionist, who had voted for Birney, Fremont, and all their successors down to Hayes — the only vote he was ever ashamed of. Now he was a "greenbacker." The country was going to the dogs, and all because the government did not furnish money enough. The people would find it out some time, he guessed. He talked as a

bird sings — for his own pleasure. But I was pleased, too. His was an amiable enthusiasm, quite exempt, as it seemed, from all that bitterness, which an exclusive possession of the truth so commonly engenders. He was greatly in earnest; he knew he was right; but he could still see the comical side of things; he still had a sense of the ludicrous; and in that lay his salvation. For a sense of the ludicrous is the best of mental antiseptics; it, if anything, will keep our perishable human nature sweet, and save it from the madhouse. His discourse was punctuated throughout with quiet laughter. Thus, when he said, "*I* call it the *late* Republican party," it was with a chuckle so good-natured, so free from acidity and self-conceit, that only a pretty stiff partisan could have taken offense. Even his predictions of impending national ruin were delivered with numberless merry quips and twinkles. Many good Republicans and good Democrats (the adjective is used in its political sense) might have envied him his sunny temper, joined, as it was, to a good stock of native shrewdness. For something in his eye made it plain that, with all his

other qualities, our merry greenbacker was a reasonably competent hand at a bargain; so that I was not in the least surprised when his seat-mate told me afterward, in a tone of much respect, that the "Colonel" owned a very comfortable property at St. Augustine. But his best possession, I still thought, was his humor and his own generous appreciation of it. To enjoy one's own jokes is to have a pretty safe insurance against inward adversity.

Happily, I say, this good-humored talker sat within hearing. Happily, too, it was now — April 4 — the height of the season for flowering dogwood, pink azalea, fringe-bushes, Cherokee roses, and water lilies. All these had blossomed abundantly, and mile after mile the wilderness and the solitary place were glad for them. Here and there, also, I caught flying glimpses of some unknown plant bearing a long upright raceme of creamy-white flowers. It might be a white lupine, I thought, till at one of our stops between stations it happened to be growing within reach. Then I guessed it to be a *Baptisia*, which guess was afterward confirmed — to my regret; for the flowers

lost at once all their attractiveness. So ineffaceable (oftenest for good, but this time for ill) is an early impression upon the least honorably esteemed of the five senses! As a boy, it was one of my tasks to keep down with a scythe the weeds and bushes in a rocky, thin-soiled cattle pasture. In that task, — which, at the best, was a little too much like work — my most troublesome enemy was the common wild indigo (*Baptisia tinctoria*), partly from the wicked pertinacity with which it sprang up again after every mowing, but especially from the fact that the cut or bruised stalk exhaled what in my nostrils was a most abominable odor. Other people do not find it so offensive, I suspect, but to me it was, and is, ten times worse than the more pungent but comparatively salubrious perfume which a certain handsome little black-and-white quadruped — handsome, but impolite — is given to scattering upon the nocturnal breeze in moments of extreme perturbation.

Somewhere beyond the Suwanee River (at which I looked as long as it remained in sight — and thought of Christine Nilsson) there came a sudden change in the aspect of

the country, coincident with a change in the nature of the soil, from white sand to red clay; a change indescribably exhilarating to a New Englander who had been living, if only for two months, in a country without hills. How good it was to see the land rising, though never so gently, as it stretched away toward the horizon! My spirits rose with it. By and by we passed extensive hillside plantations, on which little groups of negroes, men and women, were at work. I seemed to see the old South of which I had read and dreamed, a South not in the least like anything to be found in the wilds of southern and eastern Florida; a land of cotton, and, better still, a land of Southern people, instead of Northern tourists and settlers. And when we stopped at a thrifty-looking village, with neat, homelike houses, open grounds, and lordly shade-trees, I found myself saying under my breath, "Now, then, we are getting back into God's country."

As for Tallahassee itself, it was exactly what I had hoped to find it: a typical Southern town; not a camp in the woods, nor an old city metamorphosed into a fashionable

winter resort; a place untainted by "Northern enterprise," whose inhabitants were unmistakably at home, and whose houses, many of them, at least, had no appearance of being for sale. It is compactly built on a hill, — the state capitol crowning the top, — down the pretty steep sides of which run roads into the open country all about. The roads, too, are not so sandy but that it is comparatively comfortable to walk in them — a blessing which the pedestrian sorely misses in the towns of lower Florida: at St. Augustine, for example, where, as soon as one leaves the streets of the city itself, walking and carriage-riding alike become burdensome and, for any considerable distance, all but impossible. Here at Tallahassee, it was plain, I should not be kept indoors for want of invitations from without.

I arrived, as I have said, rather late in the afternoon; so late that I did nothing more than ramble a little about the city, noting by the way the advent of the chimney swifts, which I had not found elsewhere, and returning to my lodgings with a handful of "banana-shrub" blossoms, — smelling wonderfully like their name, — which a good

woman had insisted upon giving me when I stopped beside the fence to ask her the name of the bush. It was my first, but by no means my last, experience of the floral generosity of Tallahassee people.

The next morning I woke betimes, and to my astonishment found the city enveloped in a dense fog. The hotel clerk, an old resident, to whom I went in my perplexity, was as much surprised as his questioner. He did not know what it could mean, he was sure; it was very unusual; but he thought it did not indicate foul weather. For a man so slightly acquainted with such phenomena, he proved to be a remarkably good prophet; for though, during my fortnight's stay, there must have been at least eight foggy mornings, every day was sunny, and not a drop of rain fell.

That first bright forenoon is still a bright memory. For one thing, the mocking-birds outsang themselves till I felt, and wrote, that I had never heard mocking-birds before. That they really did surpass their brethren of St. Augustine and Sanford would perhaps be too much to assert, but so it seemed; and I was pleased, some months

afterward, to come upon a confirmatory judgment by Mr. Maurice Thompson, who, if any one, must be competent to speak.

"If I were going to risk the reputation of our country on the singing of a mocking-bird against a European nightingale," says Mr. Thompson,[1] "I should choose my champion from the hill-country in the neighborhood of Tallahassee, or from the environs of Mobile. . . . I have found no birds elsewhere to compare with those in that belt of country about thirty miles wide, stretching from Live Oak in Florida, by way of Tallahassee, to some miles west of Mobile."

I had gone down the hill past some negro cabins, into a small, straggling wood, and through the wood to a gate which let me into a plantation lane. It was the fairest of summer forenoons (to me, I mean; by the almanac it was only the 5th of April), and one of the fairest of quiet landscapes: broad fields rising gently to the horizon, and before me, winding upward, a grassy lane open on one side, and bordered on the other by a deep red gulch and a zigzag fence, along which grew vines, shrubs,

[1] *By-Ways and Bird-Notes*, p. 20.

and tall trees. The tender and varied tints of the new leaves, the lively green of the young grain, the dark ploughed fields, the red earth of the wayside — I can see them yet, with all that Florida sunshine on them. In the bushes by the fence-row were a pair of cardinal grosbeaks, the male whistling divinely, quite unabashed by the volubility of a mocking-bird who balanced himself on the treetop overhead,

"Superb and sole, upon a pluméd spray,"

and seemed determined to show a Yankee stranger what mocking-birds could really do when they set out. He did his work well; the love notes of the flicker could not have been improved by the flicker himself; but, right or wrong, I could not help feeling that the cardinal struck a truer and deeper note; while both together did not hinder me from hearing the faint songs of grasshopper sparrows rising from the ground on either side of the lane. It was a fine contrast: the mocker flooding the air from the topmost bough, and the sparrows whispering their few almost inaudible notes out of the grass. Yes, and at the self-same moment the eye also

had its contrast; for a marsh hawk was skimming over the field, while up in the sky soared a pair of hen-hawks.

In the wood, composed of large trees, both hard wood and pine, I had found a group of three summer tanagers, two males and one female, — the usual proportion with birds generally, one may almost say, in the pairing season. The female was the first of her sex that I had seen, and I remarked with pleasure the comparative brightness of her dress. Among tanagers, as among negroes, red and yellow are esteemed a pretty good match. At this point, too, in a cluster of pines, I caught a new song — faint and listless, like the indigo-bird's, I thought; and at the word I started forward eagerly. Here, doubtless, was the indigo-bird's southern congener, the nonpareil, or painted bunting, a beauty which I had begun to fear I was to miss. I had recognized my first tanager from afar, ten days before, his voice and theme were so like his Northern relative's; but this time I was too hasty. My listless singer was not the nonpareil, nor even a finch of any kind, but a yellow-throated warbler. For a month I had seen

birds of his species almost daily, but always in hard wood trees, and silent. Henceforth, as long as I remained in Florida, they were invariably in pines, — their summer quarters, — and in free song. Their plumage is of the neatest and most exquisite; few, even among warblers, surpass them in that regard: black and white (reminding one of the black-and-white creeper, which they resemble also in their feeding habits), with a splendid yellow gorget. Myrtle warblers (yellow-rumps) were still here (the peninsula is alive with them in the winter), and a ruby-crowned kinglet mingled its lovely voice with the simple trills of pine warblers, while out of a dense low treetop some invisible singer was pouring a stream of fine-spun melody. It should have been a house wren, I thought (another was singing close by), only its tune was several times too long.

At least four of my longer excursions into the surrounding country (long, not intrinsically, but by reason of the heat) were made with a view to possible ivory-billed woodpeckers. Just out of the town northward, beyond what appeared to be the court end of Marion Street, the principal business street

of the city, I had accosted a gentleman in a dooryard in front of a long, low, vine-covered, romantic-looking house. He was evidently at home, and not so busy as to make an interruption probably intrusive. I inquired the name of a tree, I believe. At all events, I engaged him in conversation, and found him most agreeable — an Ohio gentleman, a man of science, who had been in the South long enough to have acquired large measures of Southern *insouciance* (there are times when a French word has a politer sound than any English equivalent), which takes life as made for something better than worry and pleasanter than hard work. He had seen ivory-bills, he said, and thought I might be equally fortunate if I would visit a certain swamp, about which he would tell me, or, better still, if I would go out to Lake Bradford.

First, because it was nearer, I went to the swamp, taking an early breakfast and setting forth in a fog that was almost a mist, to make as much of the distance as possible before the sun came out. My course lay westward, some four miles, along the railway track, which, thanks to somebody, is provided

with a comfortable footpath of hard clay covering the sleepers midway between the rails. If all railroads were thus furnished they might be recommended as among the best of routes for walking naturalists, since they go straight through the wild country. This one carried me by turns through woodland and cultivated field, upland and swamp, pine land and hammock; and, happily, my expectations of the ivory-bill were not lively enough to quicken my steps or render me heedless of things along the way.

Here I was equally surprised and delighted by the sight of yellow jessamine still in flower more than a month after I had seen the end of its brief season, only a hundred miles further south. So great, apparently, is the difference between the peninsula and this Tallahassee hill-country, which by its physical geography seems rather to be a part of Georgia than of Florida. Here, too, the pink azalea was at its prettiest, and the flowering dogwood, also, true queen of the woods in Florida as in Massachusetts. The fringe-bush, likewise, stood here and there in solitary state, and thorn-bushes flourished in bewildering variety.

Nearer the track were the omnipresent blackberry vines, some patches of which are especially remembered for their bright rosy flowers.

Out of the dense vegetation of a swamp came the cries of Florida gallinules, and then, of a sudden, I caught, or seemed to catch, the sweet *kurwee* whistle of a Carolina rail. Instinctively I turned my ear for its repetition, and by so doing admitted to myself that I was not certain of what I had heard, although the sora's call is familiar, and the bird was reasonably near. I had been taken unawares, and every ornithologist knows how hard it is to be sure of one's self in such a case. He knows, too, how uncertain he feels of any brother observer who in a similar case seems troubled by no distrust of his own senses. The whistle, whatever it had been, was not repeated, and I lost my only opportunity of adding the sora's name to my Florida catalogue — a loss, fortunately, of no consequence to any but myself, since the bird is well known as a winter visitor to the State.

Further along, a great blue heron was stalking about the edge of a marshy pool,

and further still, in a woody swamp, stood three little blue herons, one of them in white plumage. In the drier and more open parts of the way cardinals, mocking-birds, and thrashers were singing, ground doves were cooing, quails were prophesying, and loggerhead shrikes sat, trim and silent, on the telegraph wire. In the pine lands were plenty of brown-headed nuthatches, full, as always, of friendly gossip; two red-shouldered hawks, for whom life seemed to wear a more serious aspect; three Maryland yellow throats; a pair of bluebirds, rare enough now to be twice welcome; a black-and-white creeper, and a yellow redpoll warbler. In the same pine woods, too, there was much good music: house wrens, Carolina wrens, red-eyed and white-eyed vireos, pine warblers, yellow-throated warblers, blue yellow-backs, red-eyed chewinks, and, twice welcome, like the bluebirds, a Carolina chickadee.

A little beyond this point, in a cut through a low sand bank, I found two pairs of rough-winged swallows, and stopped for some time to stare at them, being myself, meanwhile, a gazing-stock for two or three negroes

lounging about the door of a cabin not far away. It is a happy chance when a man's time is *doubly* improved. Two of the birds — the first ones I had ever seen, to be sure of them — perched directly before me on the wire, one facing me, the other with his back turned. It was kindly done; and then, as if still further to gratify my curiosity, they visited a hole in the bank. A second hole was doubtless the property of the other pair. Living alternately in heaven and in a hole in the ground, they wore the livery of the earth.

> "They are not fair to outward view
> As many swallows be,"

I said to myself. But I was not the less glad to see them.

I should have been gladder for a sight of the big woodpecker, whose reputed dwelling-place lay not far ahead. But, though I waited and listened, and went through the swamp, and beyond it, I heard no strange shout, nor saw any strange bird; and toward noon, just as the sun brushed away the fog, I left the railway track for a carriage by-way which, I felt sure, must somehow bring me back to the city. And so it did, past

here and there a house, till I came to the main road, and then to the Murat estate, and was again on familiar ground.

Two mornings afterward I made another early and foggy start, this time for Lake Bradford. My instructions were to follow the railway for a mile or so beyond the station, and then take a road bearing away sharply to the left. This I did, making sure I was on the right road by inquiring of the first man I saw — a negro at work before his cabin. I had gone perhaps half a mile further when a white man, on his way after a load of wood, as I judged, drove up behind me. "Won't you ride?" he asked. "You are going to Lake Bradford, I believe, and I am going a piece in the same direction." I jumped up behind (the wagon consisting of two long planks fastened to the two axles), thankful, but not without a little bewilderment. The good-hearted negro, it appeared, had asked the man to look out for me; and he, on his part, seemed glad to do a kindness as well as to find company. We jolted along, chatting at arm's length, as it were, about this and that. He knew nothing of the ivory-bill; but wild turkeys — oh, yes,

he had seen a flock of eight, as well as he could count, not long before, crossing the road in the very woods through which I was going. As for snakes, they were plenty enough, he guessed. One of his horses was bitten while ploughing, and died in half an hour. (A Florida man who cannot tell at least one snake story may be set down as having land to sell.) He thought it a pretty good jaunt to the lake, and the road was n't any too plain, though no doubt I should get there; but I began to perceive that a white man who traveled such distances on foot in that country was more of a *rara avis* than any woodpecker.

Our roads diverged after a while, and my own soon ran into a wood with an undergrowth of saw palmetto. This was the place for the ivory-bill, and as at the swamp two days before, so now I stopped and listened, and then stopped and listened again. The Fates were still against me. There was neither woodpecker nor turkey, and I pushed on, mostly through pine woods — full of birds, but nothing new — till I came out at the lake. Here, beside an idle sawmill and heaps of sawdust, I was greeted by a solitary negro,

well along in years, who demanded, in a tone of almost comical astonishment, where in the world I had come from. I told him from Tallahassee, and he seemed so taken aback that I began to think I must look uncommonly like an invalid, a "Northern consumptive," perhaps. Otherwise, why should a walk of six miles, or something less, be treated as such a marvel? However, the negro and I were soon on the friendliest of terms, talking of the old times, the war, the prospects of the colored people (the younger ones were fast going to the bad, he thought), while I stood looking out over the lake, a pretty sheet of water, surrounded mostly by cypress woods, but disfigured for the present by the doings of lumbermen. What interested me most (such is the fate of the devotee) was a single barn swallow, the first and only one that I saw on my Southern trip.

On my way back to the city, after much fatherly advice about the road on the part of the negro, who seemed to feel that I ran the greatest risk of getting lost, I made two more additions to my Florida catalogue — the wood duck and the yellow-billed

cuckoo, the latter unexpectedly early (April 11), since Mr. Chapman had recorded it as arriving at Gainesville at a date sixteen days later than this.

I did not repeat my visit to Lake Bradford; but, not to give up the ivory-bill too easily, — and because I must walk somewhere, — I went again as far as the palmetto scrub. This time, though I still missed the woodpecker, I was fortunate enough to come upon a turkey. In the thickest part of the wood, as I turned a corner, there she stood before me in the middle of the road. She ran along the horse-track for perhaps a rod, and then disappeared among the palmetto leaves.

Meanwhile, two or three days before, while returning from St. Mark's, whither I had gone for a day on the river, I had noticed from the car window a swamp, or baygall, which looked so promising that I went the very next morning to see what it would yield. I had taken it for a cypress swamp, but it proved to be composed mainly of oaks; very tall but rather slender trees, heavily draped with hanging moss and standing in black water. Among them were

the swollen stumps, three or four feet high, of larger trees which had been felled. I pushed in through the surrounding shrubbery and bay-trees, and waited for some time, leaning against one of the larger trunks and listening to the noises, of which the air of the swamp was full. Great-crested flycatchers, two Acadian flycatchers, a multitude of blue yellow-backed warblers, and what I supposed to be some loud-voiced frogs were especially conspicuous in the concert; but a Carolina wren, a cardinal, a red-eyed vireo, and a blue-gray gnatcatcher, the last with the merest thread of a voice, contributed their share to the medley, and once a chickadee struck up his sweet and gentle strain in the very depths of the swamp — like an angel singing in hell.

My walk on the railway, that wonderful St. Mark's branch (I could never have imagined the possibility of running trains over so crazy a track), took me through the choicest of bird country. The bushes were alive, and the air rang with music. In the midst of the chorus I suddenly caught somewhere before me what I had no doubt was the song of a purple finch, a bird that I had

not yet seen in Florida. I quickened my steps, and to my delight the singer proved to be a blue grosbeak. I had caught a glimpse of one two days before, as I have described in another chapter, but with no opportunity for a final identification. Here, as it soon turned out, there were at least four birds, all males, and all singing; chasing each other about after the most persistent fashion, in a piece of close shrubbery with tall trees interspersed, and acting — the four of them — just as two birds are often seen to do when contending for the possession of a building site. At a first hearing the song seems not so long sustained as the purple finch's commonly is, but exceedingly like it in voice and manner, though not equal to it, I should be inclined to say, in either respect. The birds made frequent use of a monosyllabic call, corresponding to the calls of the purple finch and the rose-breasted grosbeak, but readily distinguishable from both. I was greatly pleased to see them, and thought them extremely handsome, with their dark blue plumage set off by wing patches of rich chestnut.

A little farther, and I was saluted by the

saucy cry of my first Florida chat. The fellow had chosen just such a tangled thicket as he favors in Massachusetts, and whistled and kept out of sight after the most approved manner of his kind. On the other side of the track a white-eyed vireo was asserting himself, as he had been doing since the day I reached St. Augustine; but though he seems a pretty clever substitute for the chat in the chat's absence, his light is quickly put out when the clown himself steps into the ring. Ground doves cooed, cardinals whistled, and mocking-birds sang and mocked by turns. Orchard orioles, no unworthy companions of mocking-birds and cardinals, sang here and there from a low treetop, especially in the vicinity of houses. To judge from what I saw, they are among the most characteristic of Tallahassee birds, — as numerous as Baltimore orioles are in Massachusetts towns, and frequenting much the same kind of places. In one day's walk I counted twenty-five. Elegantly dressed as they are, — and elegance is better than brilliancy, perhaps, even in a bird, — they seem to be thoroughly democratic. It was a pleasure to see them so fond of cabin door-yards.

Of the other birds along the St. Mark's railway, let it be enough to mention white-throated and white-crowned sparrows, red-eyed chewinks (the white-eye was not found in the Tallahassee region), a red-bellied woodpecker, two red-shouldered hawks, shrikes, kingbirds, yellow-throated warblers, Maryland yellow-throats, pine warblers, palm warblers, — which in spite of their name seek their summer homes north of the United States, — myrtle warblers, now grown scarce, house wrens, summer tanagers, and quails. The last-named birds, by the way, I had expected to find known as "partridges" at the South, but as a matter of fact I heard that name applied to them only once. On the St. Augustine road, before breakfast, I met an old negro setting out for his day's work behind a pair of oxen. "Taking some good exercise?" he asked, by way of a neighborly greeting; and, not to be less neighborly than he, I responded with some remark about a big shot-gun which occupied a conspicuous place in his cart. "Oh," he said, "game is plenty out where we are going, about eight miles, and I take the gun

along." "What kind of game?" "Well, sir, we may sometimes find a partridge." I smiled at the anti-climax, but was glad to hear Bob White honored for once with his Southern title.

A good many of my jaunts took me past the gallinule swamp before mentioned, and almost always I stopped and went near. It was worth while to hear the poultry cries of the gallinules if nothing more; and often several of the birds would be seen swimming about among the big white lilies and the green tussocks. Once I discovered one of them sitting upright on a stake, — a precarious seat, off which he soon tumbled awkwardly into the water. At another time, on the same stake, sat some dark, strange-looking object. The opera-glass showed it at once to be a large bird sitting with its back toward me, and holding its wings uplifted in the familiar heraldic, *e-pluribus-unum* attitude of our American spread-eagle; but even then it was some seconds before I recognized it as an anhinga, — water turkey, — though it was a male in full nuptial garb. I drew nearer and nearer, and meanwhile it turned squarely

about, — a slow and ticklish operation, — so that its back was presented to the sun; as if it had dried one side of its wings and tail, — for the latter, too, was fully spread, — and now would dry the other. There for some time it sat preening its feathers, with monstrous twistings and untwistings of its snaky neck. If the chat is a clown, the water turkey would make its fortune as a contortionist. Finally it rose, circled about till it got well aloft, and then, setting its wings, sailed away southward and vanished, leaving me in a state of wonder as to where it had come from, and whether it was often to be seen in such a place — perfectly open, close beside the highway, and not far from houses. I did not expect ever to see another, but the next morning, on my way up the railroad to pay a second visit to the ivory-bill's swamp, I looked up by chance, — a brown thrush was singing on the telegraph wire, — and saw two anhingas soaring overhead, their silvery wings glistening in the sun as they wheeled. I kept my glass on them till the distance swallowed them up.

Of one long forenoon's ramble I retain particular remembrance, not on account of

any birds, but for a half hour of pleasant human intercourse. I went out of the city by an untried road, hoping to find some trace of migrating birds, especially of certain warblers, the prospect of whose acquaintance was one of the lesser considerations which had brought me so far from home. No such trace appeared, however, nor, in my fortnight's stay in Tallahassee, in almost the height of the migratory season, did I, so far as I could tell, see a single passenger bird of any sort. Some species arrived from the South — cuckoos and orioles, for example; others, no doubt, took their departure for the North; but to the best of my knowledge not one passed through. It was a strange contrast to what is witnessed everywhere in New England. By some other route swarms of birds must at that moment have been entering the United States from Mexico and beyond; but unless my observation was at fault, — and I am assured that sharper eyes than mine have had a similar experience, — their line of march did not bring them into the Florida hill-country. My morning's road not only showed me no birds, but led me

nowhere, and, growing discouraged, I turned back till I came to a lane leading off to the left at right angles. This I followed so far that it seemed wise, if possible, to make my way back to the city without retracing my steps. Not to spend my strength for naught, however (the noonday sun having always to be treated with respect), I made for a solitary house in the distance. Another lane ran past it. That, perhaps, would answer my purpose. I entered the yard, all ablaze with roses, and in response to my knock a gentleman appeared upon the doorstep. Yes, he said, the lane would carry me straight to the Meridian road (so I think he called it), and thence into the city. "Past Dr. H.'s?" I asked. "Yes." And then I knew where I was.

First, however, I must let my new acquaintance show me his garden. His name was G., he said. Most likely I had heard of him, for the legislature was just then having a good deal to say about his sheep, in connection with some proposed dog-law. Did I like roses? As he talked he cut one after another, naming each as he put it into my hand. Then I must look at his Japan-

ese persimmon trees, and many other things. Here was a pretty shrub. Perhaps I could tell what it was by crushing and smelling a leaf? No; it was something familiar; I sniffed, and looked foolish, and after all he had to tell me its name — camphor. So we went the rounds of the garden, — frightening a mocking-bird off her nest in an orange-tree, — till my hands were full. It is too bad I have forgotten how many pecan-trees he had planted, and how many sheep he kept. A well-regulated memory would have held fast to such figures: mine is certain only that there were four eggs in the mocking-bird's nest. Mr. G. was a man of enterprise, at any rate; a match for any Yankee, although he had come to Florida not from Yankeeland, but from northern Georgia. I hope all his crops are still thriving, especially his white roses and his Marshal Niels.

In the lane, after skirting some pleasant woods, which I meant to visit again, but found no opportunity, I was suddenly assaulted by a pair of brown thrashers, half beside themselves after their manner because of my approach to their nest. How close

my approach was I cannot say; but it must be confessed that I played upon their fears to the utmost of my ability, wishing to see as many of their neighbors as the disturbance would bring together. Several other thrashers, a catbird, and two house wrens appeared (all these, since "blood is thicker than water," may have felt some special cousinly solicitude, for aught I know), with a ruby-crowned kinglet and a field sparrow.

In the valley, near a little pond, as I came out into the Meridian road, a solitary vireo was singing, in the very spot where one had been heard six days before. Was it the same bird? I asked myself. And was it settled for the summer? Such an explanation seemed the more likely because I had found no solitary vireo anywhere else about the city, though the species had been common earlier in the season in eastern and southern Florida, where I had seen my last one — at New Smyrna — March 26.

At this same dip in the Meridian road, on a previous visit, I had experienced one of the pleasantest of my Tallahassee sensations. The morning was one of those when every bird is in tune. By the road side I had just

passed Carolina wrens, house wrens, a chipper, a field sparrow, two thrashers, an abundance of chewinks, two orchard orioles, several tanagers, a flock of quail, and mocking-birds and cardinals uncounted. In a pine wood near by, a wood pewee, a pine warbler, a yellow-throated warbler, and a pine-wood sparrow were singing — a most peculiarly select and modest chorus. Just at the lowest point in the valley I stopped to listen to a song which I did not recognize, but which, by and by, I settled upon as probably the work of a freakish prairie warbler. At that moment, as if to confirm my conjecture, — which in the retrospect becomes almost ridiculous, — a prairie warbler hopped into sight on an outer twig of the water-oak out of which the music had proceeded. Still something said, "Are you sure?" and I stepped inside the fence. There on the ground were two or three white-crowned sparrows, and in an instant the truth of the case flashed upon me. I remembered the saying of a friend, that the song of the white-crown had reminded him of the vesper sparrow and the black-throated green warbler. That was my bird; and I

listened again, though I could no longer be said to feel in doubt. A long time I waited. Again and again the birds sang, and at last I discovered one of them perched at the top of the oak, tossing back his head and warbling — a white-crowned sparrow: the one regular Massachusetts migrant which I had often seen, but had never heard utter a sound.

The strain opens with smooth, sweet notes almost exactly like the introductory syllables of the vesper sparrow. Then the tone changes, and the remainder of the song is in something like the pleasingly hoarse voice of a prairie warbler, or a black-throated green. It is soft and very pretty; not so perfect a piece of art as the vesper sparrow's tune, — few bird-songs are,— but taking for its very oddity, and at the same time tender and sweet. More than one writer has described it as resembling the song of the white-throat. Even Minot, who in general was the most painstaking and accurate of observers, as he is one of the most interesting of our systematic writers, says that the two songs are "almost exactly" alike. There could be no better example of the fallibility which at-

taches, and in the nature of the case must attach, to all writing upon such subjects. The two songs have about as much in common as those of the hermit thrush and the brown thrasher, or those of the song sparrow and the chipper. In other words, they have nothing in common. Probably in Minot's case, as in so many others of a similar nature, the simple explanation is that when he thought he was listening to one bird he was really listening to another.

The Tallahassee road to which I had oftenest resorted, to which, now, from far Massachusetts, I oftenest look back, the St. Augustine road, so called, I have spoken of elsewhere. Thither, after packing my trunk on the morning of the 18th, I betook myself for a farewell stroll. My holiday was done. For the last time, perhaps, I listened to the mocking-bird and the cardinal, as by and by, when the grand holiday is over, I shall listen to my last wood thrush and my last bluebird. But what then? Florida fields are still bright, and neither mocking-bird nor cardinal knows aught of my absence. And so it *will* be.

"When you and I behind the Veil are past,
Oh, but the long, long while the World shall last."

None the less, it is good to have lived our day and taken our peep at the mighty show. Ten thousand things we may have fretted ourselves about, uselessly or worse. But to have lived in the sun, to have loved natural beauty, to have felt the majesty of trees, to have enjoyed the sweetness of flowers and the music of birds, — so much, at least, is not vanity nor vexation of spirit.

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